A Study of Hume's Philosophy of the Passions in Book Two of *A Treatise of Human Nature*



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Abstract

The topic of this dissertation is David Hume's philosophy of the passions, as set out in Book Two of his *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40). My central thesis is that Hume's writings on the passions in Book Two display a considerable unity of purpose when read as an attempt to avoid (1) favourably comparing human sociability and actions to animal sociability and actions, and thus supposing that human beings are essentially superior to animals, and (2) unfavourably comparing human sociability and actions to an imagined ideal of perfect wisdom, and thus supposing that human sociability and actions are inferior versions of analogous divine capacities for sociability and action. Hume attempts this, I claim, by giving efficient causal explanations of man's passions and will that are equally applicable to animal passions and volitions. His aim in doing so, I conclude, was to displace human beings from the centre of the moral universe by revealing their essential similarity with animals, but to do so without conceptualising this shift as a fall from grace.

I argue for this thesis through a close study of Book Two that imbeds Hume's writings on the passions in what I believe are their most philosophically relevant intellectual contexts.

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Anyone who has spent prolonged time in the company of David Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* will know that he could have been more careful than he was regarding the use of his technical terminology, and more forthcoming than he was as to many of the details of his philosophical 'system'. This is perhaps especially true of Book Two of the *Treatise*, '*Of the Passions*', which is the topic of this dissertation. I, for one, do not believe – at least not as a rule – that Hume's obscurities are the result of his failing to adequately articulate some considered position that he can be presumed to have had on a matter, given what he says. Rather, I tend to think of Hume as working out his system on the page, and I view his obscurities as the products of his considering and re-considering his positions as he writes. As such, I have resisted the impulse to be more precise than Hume was, and to fill out the details of his system as extensively as might be thought possible. Instead I have consigned discussions of such interpretive ambiguities and disputes, where they arise, to footnotes.

I too, of course, could have been more careful in my expressions, and more detailed in my exposition; but, apart from those instances falling under the caveat above, any obscurities can be assigned to indolence.

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Introduction

David Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40) consists of three Books.[1] Book One, '*Of the Understanding*', is chiefly concerned to explain the nature of our perceptions, and the manner in which we reason upon them. Book Two, '*Of the Passions*', is primarily concerned with the nature of human sociability and action. While Book Three, '*Of Morals*', is primarily concerned with the origin of our moral sentiments, as well as the origin of moral institutions such as justice, government, and manners. Books One and Two were published together in January 1739, just a few months shy of Hume's twenty-seventh birthday. Book Three was published almost two years later in November 1740. When Hume first advertised his *Treatise* to the public he projected further volumes addressing 'politics' and 'criticism', which he said, 'will complete this Treatise of human nature' (T *Advertisement* (1739 – p. 2), SBN xii). These last books never came.

There are two broadly contrasting ways that we might approach the incompleteness of Hume's *Treatise*, as measured against his original projections. We might suppose that at some point after the publication of Book Three, or maybe even earlier, Hume had come to think that no more was needed to

[1] References to David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, (2 Vols.) (eds. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton) Oxford Press, 2007, Vol 1 are T followed by book, part, section, paragraph, followed by SBN and the page number in the older Selby-Bigge and Nidditch edition.

'complete' his 'Treatise of human nature'. This is not to say, to be clear, that Hume thought his philosophy of human nature was incapable of further exposition, or of application to further subjects, but rather that with the publication of a book on morals, Hume believed that he had produced a self-standing philosophy of man. On this reading, Hume's essential philosophy of human nature is contained within the three books of the *Treatise* as we have them, and is either refined or reformed – depending on one's preferred interpretation – throughout his later writings; including his political essays, as well as those on literary and economic subjects.[2]

Another option is to hold that by the time Hume had readied Book Three for publication his confidence in the unity of his original philosophical project had begun to wane, or at least that he had begun to despair of ever pulling it off. Towards this point, the difference in tone between the initial 'Advertisement' to Books One and Two of the *Treatise* and the later 'Advertisement' to Book Three is instructive. In the first 'Advertisement' Hume writes that:

> *My design in the present work is sufficiently explain'd in the* introduction. *The reader must only observe, that all the subjects I have there plann'd out to myself, are not treated of in these two volumes. The subjects of the* understanding *and* passions *make a compleat chain of reasoning by themselves; and I was willing to take advantage of this natural division, in order to try the taste of the public. If I have the good fortune to meet with success, I shall proceed to the examination of* morals, politics, *and* criticism*; which*

[2] For an historical (and critical) account of this general conception of Hume's *Treatise* project, and of Hume's philosophy on the whole, see James A. Harris, *Hume: An Intellectual Biography*, Cambridge University Press, 2015 (*Hume*), pp. 1-14. For a brief history of Hume's publications, see James A. Harris, 'Hume's Life and Works', in *The Oxford Handbook of Hume* (ed. Paul Russell), Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 1-15.

> *will compleat this* Treatise of human nature*. The approbation of the public I consider as the greatest reward of my labours; but am determin'd to regard its judgment, whatever it be, as my best instruction.*
>
> (T *Advertisement* (1739 – p. 2), SBN xii)

Here Hume makes it clear that his *Treatise* is incomplete as it stands, even if the subjects of Books One and Two together 'make a compleat chain of reasoning by themselves'. Yet he is obviously quite confident of completing his *Treatise* eventually, should it gain the approval of the reading public. Such confidence is conspicuously absent from the 'Advertisement' to Book Three. In which Hume writes:

> *I think it proper to inform the public, that tho' this be a third volume of the* Treatise of Human Nature, *yet 'tis in some measure independent of the other two, and requires not that the reader shou'd enter into all the abstract reasonings contain'd in them. I am hopeful it may be understood by ordinary readers, with as little attention as is usually given to any books of reasoning. It must only be observ'd, that I continue to make use of the terms,* impressions *and* ideas, *in the same sense as formerly; and that by impressions I mean our stronger perceptions, such as our sensations, affections and sentiments; and by ideas the fainter perceptions, or the copies of these in the memory and imagination.*
>
> (T *Advertisement* (1740 – p. 292), SBN 454/5)[3]

It ought to be noted here that although Hume advertises Book Three as being 'independent of the other two', this is only 'in some measure'. Not only this, but

[3] The *Advertisement* to Book Three is not paginated in the Selby-Bigge Nidditch edition of the *Treatise*, but is located between pages 454 and 455.

Hume immediately goes on to say that he is 'not, however, without hopes, that the present system of philosophy [i.e. his *Treatise* philosophy] will acquire new force as it advances; and that our reasonings concerning *morals* will corroborate whatever has been said concerning the *understanding* and *passions*' (T 3.1.1.1, SBN 455). As such, it would be wrong to claim that by the time of the publication of Book Three, Hume had abandoned his initial goal of a unified study of human nature. Yet, by the same measure, for Hume to now be 'not without hopes' of producing a unified philosophy is for him to have considerably less hope of doing so than he originally had. In light of this, his failure to publish further volumes of the *Treatise* on 'politics' and 'criticism' can be seen as his eventually abandoning such hopes, and redirecting his intellectual endeavours into new projects; most pertinently, into the atomisation of his *Treatise* philosophy into the two *Enquiries*, and into short essays and dissertations.

I like to think of this second way of approaching the unity of Hume's *Treatise* as adopting a "bundle theory" of Hume's philosophy: on which the fundamental interpretive principle is that there is no necessary connection between the different parts of Hume's philosophical writings, but rather that Hume's writings are a tightly connected bundle of ideas and arguments that are, in principle, all separable from each other. By contrast, I think of the first reading as pursuing an "essentialist" conception of Hume's philosophy. On this reading, the fundamental interpretive principle is that there is some one thing that Hume's philosophy of human nature essentially is, always was, and forever will be; and which lies waiting to be discovered through the close study of all his writings. As a matter of interpretation itself, i.e. as a question of whether Hume conceived of his own

philosophy in the first way or the second, there is no answer. There is text enough to support either reading.[4] Yet the question of how to conceive of the unity of Hume's philosophy is not a matter of interpreting what Hume thought about his philosophy, but is a philosophical decision as to how to interpret his philosophy. And I am disposed towards the "bundle theory".[5]

The topic of this dissertation is Hume's philosophy of the passions, and in particular, Hume's philosophy of the passions as set out in Book Two of the *Treatise*. My aim – in line with the "bundle theory" outlined above – is to demonstrate that Hume's writings on the passions in Book Two of the *Treatise* have a philosophical importance that is independent of the rest of his philosophical writings. I attempt this through a close study of Book Two that imbeds Hume's writings on the passions in what I believe are their most philosophically relevant intellectual contexts.

[4] Or lack of text enough. As Harris writes: 'In later life, Hume nowhere described himself as thinking of his works as a kind of unity at all. Once he had given up on the *Treatise*, Hume never once presented himself as a systematic thinker, as someone who conceived of his writings in terms of foundation and superstructure, or of core and periphery, or of trunk and branches'; Harris, *Hume*, p. 13.

[5] Don Garrett has observed that '[o]ne of the most general controversies about Hume's philosophy is, in fact, whether that philosophy itself constitutes a coherent whole, or whether it can only be mined for stimulating but disconnected discussions of individual topics'; Don Garrett, *Hume*, Routledge, 2015, p. xxi. This seems to me a false dichotomy. Surely we can study Hume's 'discussions of individual topics' as connected to each other without demanding that they form a 'coherent whole'. Garrett himself says that he is 'firmly convinced of its overall consistency and coherence', i.e. of the consistency and coherence of Hume's philosophy, on the whole (xxi). I too believe that Hume's philosophical writings display a remarkable 'consistency and coherence'. What I do not believe, however, is that there is some static object, 'Hume's philosophy', that is waiting to be given a consistent articulation through close study of Hume's texts; like a puzzle waiting to be solved. For I believe that close scrutiny of Hume's writings, and especially of the *Treatise*, reveals that Hume's thought is moving, such that the consistency and coherence of Hume's philosophy is akin to that of a river. I tend, then, to think of 'Hume's philosophy' as a fluid thing, or, to paraphrase Hume himself, that if there is anything essential to Hume's philosophy, it is its 'changeableness' (see T 2.1.4.3, SBN 283).

To be clear, when I say that Hume's writing on the passions have an independent philosophical importance, I do not mean to say that they ought to be interpreted without any reference to his other philosophical writings, and especially to the other two books of the *Treatise*: this would be to embrace a bizarre sort of interpretive asceticism. I do not mean to claim, for instance, that the truth of Hume's psychology of the passions does not rest upon the truth of the theory of associative relations between ideas that he develops in Book One: it clearly does. Rather, my claim is that Hume's writings on the passions nevertheless have a philosophical value that is independent of the truth of the epistemology that he presents in Book One, and of the moral philosophy that he develops in Book Three; such that they can be profitably read even by those who are not convinced of the basic truth of Hume's epistemology and his moral philosophy.

My aim in this introductory chapter is to situate my project within the broader context of scholarship on Hume's philosophy of the passions. As a way in, however, I will first give a sketch of what I take to be Hume's own conception of his philosophy of the passions, drawn from claims that he makes across Books One and Two. Indeed, if there is anything that unifies the three books of the *Treatise* it is a concern for origins: of ideas, of passions, and of moral behaviour. Hume's own ideas, passions, and moral character were not exempt from this; and it is my opinion that we can learn much about Hume's philosophical designs by studying the manner in which he himself describes them. For while we ought not to treat Hume's testimony as to his own motives as gospel, we ought to acknowledge that Hume had an expert talent for describing the interior life of

human beings, and that he was just as capable of turning it upon himself as upon mankind in general, which is reason enough to trust what he says.

1. Hume's Gambit

We can begin at the very end of Book Two, with the section titled '*Of curiosity, or the love of truth*' (T 2.3.10, SBN 448-54). In particular, with a comparison that Hume draws between the passion for 'philosophy' and the passion for 'hunting'. Here Hume, with characteristic hyperbole, asserts that:

> there cannot be two passions more nearly resembling each other, than those of hunting and philosophy, whatever disproportion may at first sight appear betwixt them.
>
> (T 2.3.10.8, SBN 451)

More precisely, Hume contends that philosophy and hunting are similar insofar as 'the principle foundation of the pleasure' that we derive from these activities consists in the 'action and pursuit' involved, rather than in the 'attainment of the end' (T 2.3.10.7-8, SBN 451-2). In the case of philosophy, this is to say that what we chiefly find pleasurable is the 'exercise of genius' required to overcome intellectual difficulties on the way to discovering truth, not the discovery of truth itself (see T 2.3.10.3-8, SBN 449-51); whereas the primary 'pleasure of hunting', Hume thinks, 'consists in the action of the mind and body; the motion, the attention, the difficulty, and the uncertainty', not in the act of killing (see T 2.3.10.8, SBN 451-2).

The comparison of philosophy with hunting was a common one in Hume's time, and we find that a number of Hume's contemporaries describe philosophical reasoning as a *hunt* for the causes of various phenomena.[6] Not only this, but both Locke and Berkeley had drawn specific attention to the fact that – as Locke had put it in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) – the search after truth is,

> a sort of hawking and hunting, wherein the very pursuit makes a great part of the pleasure … Thus he who … sets his own Thoughts to work, to find and follow Truth, will (whatever he lights on) not miss the Hunter's Satisfaction; every moment of Pursuit, will reward his pains with some delight; and he will have Reason to think his time not ill spent, even when he cannot much boast of any great Acquisition.[7]

When read against claims such as these, it would seem that by comparing hunting and philosophy in the manner that he does, Hume is self-consciously following Locke in presenting his philosophical researches – and indeed philosophical research in general – as an intellectually edifying form of entertainment.

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[6] See, for instance, Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, (ed. Edwin Curley), Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994, p. 13 (3.5-6); George Berkeley, *Alciphron: or, The Minute Philosopher. In Seven Dialogues. Containing an Apology for the Christian Religion, against those who are called Free-thinkers* (*Alciphron*) in George Berkeley, *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, (eds. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (9 vols.), London: Nelson, 1948-1957: Vol 3, p. 175 (5.1). John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (*Essay*), (ed. P. H. Nidditch), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, p. 6 (*Epistle*).

[7] Locke, *Essay*, p. 6 (*Epistle*); Berkeley, *Alciphron*, p. 175; See also, Joseph Butler, *Fifteen Sermons Preached at The Rolls Chapel*. Edited by T.A. Roberts (Society for the Production of Christian Knowledge, 1970), p. 143.

At the same time, however, their entertainment value was not the only thing that Hume thought the activities of hunting and philosophising had in common. Hume also held that ''tis evident likewise, that these actions must be attended with an idea of utility, in order to their having any effect upon us' (T 2.3.10.8, SBN 451). To support this claim, Hume describes,

> [a] man of the greatest fortune, and the farthest remov'd from avarice, [who] tho' he takes a pleasure in hunting after partridges and pheasants, feels no satisfaction in shooting crows and magpies; and that because he considers the first as fit for the table, and the other as entirely useless.
>
> (T 2.3.10.8, SBN 451)

The conclusion that Hume draws from this observation is that while we do find the activity of hunting to be pleasurable in itself, the pleasure that it causes is not so great that we will keep it up unless we *also* believe that the game we chase is of some importance – that is it 'fit' to 'table' before others (see T 2.3.10.8, SBN 451-2). The case is the same, Hume thinks, in philosophy. To this end, Hume asserts that 'tho' the exercise of genius be the principal source of satisfaction that we receive from the sciences, yet I doubt, if it be alone sufficient to give any considerable enjoyment. The truth we discover must also be of some importance' (T 2.3.10.4, SBN 449).

Yet, this being the case, it turns out that Hume has a rather different conception of philosophical endeavour to that which Locke does. For while they both conceive of philosophy as a hunt for knowledge in which the pursuit makes up

the lion's share of the pleasure, Locke conceived of philosophy as a hunt for knowledge of anything and everything, no matter how inconsequential, whereas Hume conceived of philosophy as a hunt for knowledge of truths that we believe to be of some importance to humanity. Only then, Hume thinks, do we experience the 'Hunter's Satisfaction' that comes from independent thinking, as Locke had aptly put it.

This aspect of Hume's conception of philosophical endeavour comes out nicely in the conclusion to the first Book of the *Treatise*, where Hume explicitly discusses 'the origin' of his own philosophy (see T 1.4.7.12-15, SBN 270-4). The immediate context here is that Hume had just raised serious doubts as to the 'reasonableness' of philosophical endeavour in general, given that his own such endeavours had left him 'ready to reject all belief and reasoning' and unable 'to look upon [any] opinion even as more probably or likely than another' (T 1.4.7.8, SBN 268-9). At the same time, however, Hume says that he still finds himself 'naturally *inclin'd*' to philosophise. Or more precisely, that he:

> cannot forbear having a curiosity to be acquainted with the principles of moral good and evil, the nature and foundation of government, and the cause of those several passions and inclinations, which actuate and govern me. I am uneasy to think I approve of one object, and disapprove of another; call one thing beautiful, and another deform'd; decide concerning truth and falshood, reason and folly, without knowing upon what principles I proceed. I am concern'd for the condition of the learned world, which lies under such a deplorable ignorance in all these particulars. I feel an ambition to arise in me of contributing to the instruction of mankind, and of acquiring a name by my inventions and discoveries.

(T 1.4.7.12, SBN 270-1)

'These sentiments', Hume says, 'spring up naturally' within him, and that if he were to 'banish them' then he would be 'a loser in point of pleasure' (T 1.4.7.12, SBN 271): thus he pushes on with his philosophical researches, despite having developed a sceptical attitude towards many of his most fundamental beliefs: including the belief in the existence of an external word (see T 1.4.2, SBN 187-218), in his personal identity and that of others (see T 1.4.6, SBN 251-63), and in the veracity of his rational capacities (see T 1.4.1, SBN 180-7 and see T 1.4.7, SBN 263-74).

There is much that might be said about this passage. What I want to focus on, however, is the fact that Hume's desire to discover the principles of morals, government, and the passions is attended with a sense of their importance to the rest of 'the learned world'. In particular, it is notable that it is not simply his own intellectual agitation that draws him towards philosophy – his uneasiness at his own ignorance – but a sense that discovering the principles of 'human nature', broadly conceived, is an especially useful sort of intellectual sport; one that is fit to table before the rest of the learned world. Hume's sense of the importance of his intellectual interests raises within him an ambition 'of contributing to the instruction of mankind', as well as of 'acquiring a name' for himself through his discoveries.

All this is a far cry from Locke's depiction of himself as haphazardly cobbling together bits and pieces of his thinking, whenever he happened to have the time.[8] Indeed, it is quite clear that where Locke believed it was 'ambition enough to be employed as an Under-Labourer in the clearing the ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish, that lies in the way to knowledge'[9], Hume's ambition was to become something of an intellectual over-lord: to enter into a master-student relationship with the rest of mankind, and to become famous for it. The sheer scope of this ambition is astounding, if not absurd, and it is no wonder that Hume was disappointed with the paltry reception that his *Treatise* initially received.[10] Did he really think that the commonwealth of learning would bow down to a twenty-six year old tyro, publishing in anonymity? Maybe not – maybe he was hamming things up for effect – yet, whatever the case, it is no less astounding that his intellectual ambitions have more or less come to fruition, some three hundred years after the fact.

Before turning to the present, however, there is one more layer to add to Hume's conception of his philosophical ambitions. For, immediately after having compared philosophy to hunting, Hume goes on to observe that:

> [i]f we want another parallel to these affections, we may consider the passion of gaming, which affords a pleasure from the same principles as hunting and philosophy. It has been remark'd, that the pleasure of gaming arises not from interest alone; since many leave a sure gain for this entertainment: Neither is it deriv'd from the game

[8] See here, Locke, *Essay*, pp. 6-9 (*Epistle*).
[9] Locke, *Essay*, p. 10 (*Epistle*).
[10] See here, David Hume, *My Own Life*, in David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, (ed. Stephen Buckle) Cambridge University Press, 2007 (*My Own Life*), pp. 215-7.

> alone; since the same persons have no satisfaction, when they play for nothing: But proceeds from both these causes united.
>
> (T 2.3.10.9, SBN 452)

More precisely, Hume holds that whenever we have an 'interest' at stake in any game this 'engages our attention', such that 'the difficulty, variety, and sudden reverses of fortune' that come from playing the game give us 'a sensible pleasure' (see T 2.3.10.10, SBN 452). Yet, at the same time, it is only when we have put our interests at *risk* that we find the game pleasurable in this manner, for we find that when we 'play for nothing' we do not feel the same sort of pleasure, even if the game remains the same.

We might see this new comparison between philosophy and gambling as Hume presenting a further analogy designed to support his overall theory that some 'idea of utility' is necessary in order to render the act of philosophising pleasant. Yet, by the same measure, we might also see it as a further explication of his conception of philosophical endeavour, his own included. In particular, we might say that Hume identifies two distinct aspects of philosophical endeavour. In one sense, philosophical endeavour is like hunting, insofar as we must have some idea of the public utility of that which we search after. Indeed, it is Hume's contention that it is only when we have such an idea that we find the activity of searching after truth – with all its false leads, dead ends, and difficulty – to be enjoyable. In another sense, however, philosophising is like gambling, insofar as we also have a personal stake in the success of our endeavours, namely our *name* or intellectual reputation. This private interest that we have in the success of our

philosophical endeavours 'engages our attention' and makes the difficulty involved in the search after truth enjoyable: for if we have 'the good fortune to meet with success' – as Hume puts it in the first 'Advertisement' – then the payoff is a place in the pantheon of philosophical greats; but if we fail, then we are consigned to eternal obscurity, which is not much better than never having been named at all – to be still-born, as it were.

The direct comparison of philosophising with gambling has a precedent in Hobbes. In his own tract on *Humane Nature* (1684) Hobbes had defined '*curiosity*' as a pleasant motion of the spirits that was awakened by admiration for novelties, and that 'from this beginning is derived all *philosophy*; as *astronomy* from the admiration of the course of heaven; *natural philosophy* from the strange effects of the elements and other bodies'[11]. At the same time, however, Hobbes held that:

> [b]ecause *curiosity* is *delight*, therefore *novelty* is so, but especially that novelty from which a man conceiveth an *opinion* true or false of *bettering* his own estate; for, in such case, they stand affected with the hope that all gamesters have while the cards are shuffling.[12]

It is an arresting metaphor. Especially so, we might surmise, to a young man with a well-documented love of card games, and a life-long concern for his intellectual

[11] Thomas Hobbes, *Human Nature: Or the Fundamental Elements of Policy*, Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1994 (*Human Nature*), p. 51.
[12] Hobbes, *Human Nature*, p. 51.

reputation:[13] just the kind of person to go looking for the underlying principle of Hobbes' metaphor.

Indeed, the conception of philosophy as something of a reputational gamble provides a useful frame for understanding one of the most vexed questions in Hume scholarship. Namely, the general interpretive question of how to square the competing 'sceptical' and 'naturalistic' tendencies within Hume's thought.[14] This question famously comes to head at the conclusion to Book One, in which Hume gives a highly dramatic rendition of his personal descent into a pit of sceptical despair - what he at one point describes as a 'philosophical melancholy and delirium' (T 1.4.7.9, SBN 269) – before giving a laughably lame account of his willingness to continue philosophising, thanks to the natural return of a 'serious good-humour'd disposition' (T 1.4.7.11, SBN 270). Much ink has been spilt trying to make sense of Hume's decision to continue on with his philosophising after his sceptical breakdown, and scholars have been particularly concerned to show that Hume was not only warranted to do so, but that he believed he was as well.[15] For my part, however, I think that Hume *hoped* his naturalistic conception of philosophical reasoning was able to stand up under its own weight, and did not collapse into a hopeless scepticism; but he could not be sure. Either way, the

[13] On Hume's love of the card-game whist, see Ernest Campbell Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980, p. 203; on Hume's concern for his literary reputation, see David Hume, *My Own Life*, pp. 215-22; see also David Hume, *Letters of David Hume (Vol. 1)*, (ed J. Y. T. Greig), Oxford University Press, 1969. p. 17.

[14] For a primer on the issues here, see Barry Stroud, 'Naturalism and Skepticism in the Philosophy of Hume', in *The Oxford Handbook of Hume* (ed. Paul Russell), Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 21-31.

[15] For a recent book-length defense of the position that Hume's decision to continue philosophising is justified, see Frederick F. Schmitt, *Hume's Epistemology in the Treatise: A Veritistic Interpretation,* Oxford University Press, 2014.

chance of winning philosophical fame as an educator of mankind was worth the risk of ending up in the philosophical dustbin, so he rolled the dice.

This conception of the origin of Hume's philosophy is especially useful when considering the philosophical importance of Book Two of the *Treatise*. For when Hume first set out upon his study of the human mind, he divided the mind's perceptions into two types: into what he called 'impressions', which include our immediate sensory perceptions as well as our passions and sentiments, and what he called 'ideas', which Hume understood to be phenomenally weaker 'copies' of impressions, but essentially the same thing (see T 1.1.1, SBN 1-7). Given the status of ideas as copies of impressions, Hume remarks that 'method seems to require we should examine our impressions, before we consider our ideas' (T 1.1.2.1, SBN 7). This is to say, in other words, that a methodical study of the mind ought, *inter alia*, to examine the principles of the passions, prior to the principles of the understanding. This said, however, Hume contends that as the,

> passions, desires, and emotions, which principally deserve our attention, arise mostly from ideas, 'twill be necessary to reverse that method which at first sight seems so natural; and in order to explain the nature and principles of the human mind, give a particular account of ideas, before we proceed to impressions.
>
> (T 1.1.2.1, SBN 8)

It is for this reason, Hume says, that Book One of the *Treatise* is concerned with the 'understanding', while Book Two is concerned with the 'passions'.

The problem, however, is that Hume's methodical examination of the understanding is what induces his sceptical despair, and leads him to question whether there is any point in his continuing with his philosophical study of the human mind. This being the case, it is possible to read Hume's decision to keep up with his philosophy and continue on to Book Two as a gamble on the philosophical merits of his philosophy of the passions. For while we will never know how much of Book Two Hume had composed before he had finished Book One, there is every reason to think that he had *some* idea of what he was going to argue, given what he had been arguing in Book One. His gamble, then, is that his philosophy of the passions would be convincing enough, important enough, to win him a place amongst the educators of mankind.[16]

2. The Reception of Hume's Philosophy of the Passions

At which point we can turn to the question of what Hume had hoped to teach us with his philosophy of the passions. A good place to begin here is with the conclusion to another work, *A Dissertation on the Passions*, which Hume published as part of his *Four Dissertations* (1757). The *Dissertation* itself is a

[16] One could, of course, maintain that Hume's sceptical reflections as to the rational warrant of causal reasoning pose a permanent challenge to the kind of naturalistic causal-explanatory project that he undertakes in Book Two, regardless of his own hopes for its success, and that Hume's philosophy of the passions either stands or falls on the issue of whether such scepticism can be ultimately overcome. To my mind, the authentic (if somewhat maddening) Humean response to this worry is: Maybe. For Hume also says that '[a] true sceptic will be diffident of his philosophical doubts, as well as of his philosophical conviction; and will never refuse any innocent satisfaction, which offers itself, upon account of either of them' and that '[t]he conduct of a man, who studies philosophy in this careless manner, is more truly sceptical than that of one, who feeling in himself an inclination to it, is yet so over-whelm'd with doubts and scruples, as totally to reject it' (T 1.4.7.14, SBN 273). We might say, then, that it would be dogmatic to totally dismiss the merits of Hume's philosophy of the passions on the basis of sceptical concerns as to the rational warrant of his causal-explanatory project, and that if one were truly sceptical of the entire enterprise then this very scepticism gives one grounds enough to entertain its truth, should one be so inclined as to apply oneself to the study of it.

highly truncated version of the text of Book Two of the *Treatise*, along with some structural changes and a few conceptual adjustments.[17] With its final paragraph, however, Hume excuses its brevity by saying that:

> I pretend not to have here exhausted this subject. It is sufficient for my purpose, if I have made it appear, that, in the production and conduct of the passions, there is a certain regular mechanism, which is susceptible of as accurate a disquisition, as the laws of motion, optics, hydrostatics, or any part of natural philosophy.[18]

We ought not to suppose that Hume's overall purpose with the *Dissertation* was the same as with Book Two of the *Treatise*. Yet, by the same measure, insofar as Hume believed that with the *Dissertation* he had at least 'made it appear' that our passions, as well as their 'conduct', are both produced by 'a certain regular mechanism'; and that this mechanism is 'susceptible of as accurate a disquisition, as the laws of motion, optics, hydrostatics, or any part of natural philosophy'; then it would seem that Book Two of the *Treatise* was supposed to show this as well, and in more detail.

Indeed that this was amongst Hume's aims with Book Two has never really been in doubt. What has been vigorously debated, however, is the philosophical point, and value, of Hume's attempting to do so. As regards his attempt to show that the 'conduct' of our passions – by which I suppose him to mean their regulation – is

[17] For the only extended study of the *Dissertation on the Passions* in relation to Book Two of the *Treatise* (that I know of), see Amyas Merivale, *Hume on Art, Emotion, and Superstition*, Routledge, 2019, esp. pp. 128-44; for a detailed account of the textual truncations, see Tom Beauchamp, 'Introduction: A History of Two Dissertations' in David Hume, *A Dissertation on the Passions: The Natural History of Religion: A Critical Edition*, (ed. Tom Beauchamp), Oxford University Press, 2007 (*Dissertation*), pp. l-cxvi.

[18] Hume, *Dissertation*, p. 29 (6.19).

not the product of 'reason', but is reducible to mechanical principles of action, Hume has been severely chastened – both for his execution and his intentions. Thomas Reid regarded Hume's denial of rational principles of action – encapsulated in Hume's infamous dictum that 'reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions' (T 2.3.3.4, SBN 414-5) – as hopelessly confused,[19] a judgement that many others have shared.[20] T.H. Green goes even further. In his general introduction to Books Two and Three of the *Treatise*, Green characterises Hume's mechanistic account of volitional actions (as first set out across sections 2.3.1-3) as a deliberate attempt to 'degrade' morality by pouring 'solvent' on reason.[21]

Green is similarly dismissive of Hume's account of the causal origins of various passions, the exposition of which makes up the bulk of Book Two.[22] Green presents Book Two – the very work he is introducing – as proceeding from false assumptions, and, as a result, as being full of explanatory 'subterfuges'[23]. An especially entertaining example concerns Hume's attempt to explain the origin of pride and humility, as well as love and hatred, from what he (Hume) calls a 'double relation of ideas and impressions'[24]. Here Green wryly observes that to make his explanation work, Hume introduces a principle of association between impressions which is similar to, but slightly different from, the principle of

[19] Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, (eds. Knud Haakonssen and James A. Harris), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010, p. 157; see also pp. 135-6, 153.
[20] Even those who are otherwise favourably disposed towards Hume's moral theory have been relatively unimpressed. See here, J.L. Mackie, *Hume's Moral Theory*, London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1980, pp. 44-63.
[21] T. H. Green, 'Introduction to Moral Part of the *Treatise*' in *The Philosophical Works of David Hume*, (eds. T. H. Green and T. H. Grose), London: Longmans, Green, and Co, (4 vols.), 1874-5: Vol 2 (1874) (*Introduction*). pp. 1, 48-54.
[22] Green, *Introduction*, pp. 32-48.
[23] Green, *Introduction*, p. 37.
[24] See here, Green, *Introduction*, pp. 35-42.

association between ideas that he had introduced in Book One. This is 'somewhat strange', Green says, given that Hume had previously claimed that there was no essential difference between impressions and ideas, but rather that ideas were just phenomenally weaker 'copies' of impressions:[25] for, if this were the case, ought any principle of association between ideas apply equally to impressions?

Indeed, almost any objection that might be levelled at the coherence of Hume's philosophy of the passions can be found in Green's introduction; the writing of which Green described as an 'irksome labour' whose chief goal was to show that there was nothing of value in Hume's 'anachronistic system'[26]. As such, we might say that – somewhat ironically – Hume's stock as a philosopher had never been lower than when, in 1874 not yet one hundred years after his death, the most complete edition of his philosophy that had ever been published had just gone to press. He would seem to have lost his gamble.

Hume's fortunes began to change, however, with the work of Norman Kemp Smith. In a pair of articles published in *Mind* at the turn of the twentieth century,[27] and then followed through to conclusion in his *The Philosophy of David Hume* (1941), Kemp Smith launched an attack on the then traditional conception of Hume as a wholly sceptical philosopher.[28] This understanding of Hume's philosophy had its origins in Reid, and Green was its foremost modern adherent.

[25] Green, *Introduction*, p. 36.
[26] Green, *Introduction*, p. 71.
[27] Norman Kemp Smith, 'The Naturalism of David Hume (I)', *Mind* 14.54 (April 1905), pp. 149-73; and Norman Kemp Smith, 'The Naturalism of David Hume (II)', *Mind* 14.55 (July 1905), pp. 335-47.
[28] See Norman Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume,* New York: Palgrave, Macmillan, 1941, pp. 3-14; See also on this point, John Laird, *Hume's Philosophy of Human Nature*, Routledge, 1932.

The basic idea here, as Kemp Smith describes it, was that 'Hume's teaching is sheerly negative, being in effect little more than a *reductio ad absurdum* of the principles which Hume's predecessors [primarily Locke and Berkeley], and Hume himself, have followed in their enquiries'[29]. On this reading, Hume's arguments against the rationality of belief in the external world, against a substantial personal identity, and against the reasonableness of reasoning itself, were designed to show that the so-called 'theory of ideas' common to Locke, Berkeley (and also Descartes) was self-refuting. To those who accepted this reading of Hume's philosophy, Hume's scepticism in morals was of a piece with his scepticism in epistemology, and his overall philosophy was a potent intellectual solvent, to be handled very carefully, and only as necessity required.

Against this, Kemp Smith claimed that the 'correct reading' of Hume's purposes with his sceptical arguments was to show that our most fundamental beliefs – our belief in the existence of external objects, in our personal identity, and in the rational warrant of our arguments – are the products of 'feeling, not reason or understanding … and therefore also not ideas – at least not 'ideas' as hitherto understood'[30]. Hume's most 'general title' for such 'feelings', Kemp Smith claimed, is ''passion' … and belief, he teaches, is a passion'[31]. This being the case, Kemp Smith asserted that:

[29] Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 3.
[30] Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 11.
[31] Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 11.

> The maxim which is central in his ethics – 'Reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions' – is no less central in his theory of knowledge, being there the maxim: 'Reason is and ought to be subordinate to our natural beliefs'.[32]

It was this general disposition of thought that Kemp Smith coined Hume's 'naturalism', and he claimed that it represented Hume's fundamental philosophical disposition, against which his sceptical arguments, as well as everything else in his philosophy, ought to be understood.

Kemp Smith's conception of Hume as a fundamentally naturalistic philosopher has been widely influential. It is notable, however, that Kemp Smith himself had a low opinion of Book Two. In a section of *The Philosophy of David Hume* with the amusing title, '*Unsatisfactory Features of the Argument and Exposition in Book II*', Kemp Smith writes (and I quote at length):

> For several reasons Book II, as regards sequence and mode of exposition, is the least satisfactory of the three books which constitute the *Treatise*. In the first place, the reader has been led, by the order in which Hume has chosen to expound his teaching, to expect that in passing to Book II the central doctrines of Book I will be illustrated and enforced. Instead he finds himself faced by a quite new set of problems, but with little direct bearing on the problems of knowledge, and with their ethical bearings treated only in an incidental, somewhat causal manner … More than a third of Book II is employed in the treatment of four passions which have no very direct bearing upon Hume's ethical problems, and play indeed no really distinctive part in Hume's system – pride, humility, love and hatred, viewed as operating in and through a complex

[32] Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 11.

> double process of association. In so far as Hume's purpose in discussing these four passions is to support his thesis that the laws of association play a rôle in the mental world no less important than that of gravity in the physical world, his argument does connect itself with Book I … But even so, he bewilders his readers by introducing two special laws of association (one of them between *impressions*!) additional to those mentioned in Book I, and by an over-ingenious elaboration of his argument. This is, indeed, the most outstanding instance in which Hume's secondary plot – a statics and dynamics of the mind – has broken in upon, and has unhappily thrown into confusion, the requirements proper to his main programme.[33]

This passage is worth quoting at length because it reveals that Kemp Smith's disagreement with Green and others as to the merits of Hume's philosophy was a disagreement over the merits of Hume's epistemology. Regarding the philosophy of the passions that Hume develops in Book Two, however, Kemp Smith mostly agreed that it was a 'hindrance'[34]: indeed, according to Kemp Smith, the only element of Book Two of any importance was Hume's discussion of sympathy, which, in all important respects, re-appears in Book Three anyway.[35]

The passage above is also useful insofar as Kemp Smith's criticisms of Book Two served as grist to the mill for a later generation of scholars, who – while accepting Kemp Smith's thesis that Hume's fundamental philosophical disposition was naturalistic, rather than sceptical – set out to prove that Kemp Smith had underestimated the importance of Hume's philosophy of the passions to his overall philosophy of human nature. Páll Árdal, for one, took it upon

[33] Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, pp. 160-1.
[34] Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 161.
[35] Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, pp. 169-77.

himself to demonstrate the crucial importance of the passions of pride, humility, love and hatred to Hume's moral philosophy – in particular their close connection to moral sentiments.[36] While Nicholas Capaldi sought to show that Hume's 'statics and dynamics of the mind' was not a 'secondary plot', as Kemp Smith had claimed, but was the *primary* plot, and that Hume's causal account of the origins of our passions played a leading role.[37]

More precisely, Capaldi argued that Kemp Smith's thesis regarding 'the primacy of feeling in Hume' had the 'unfortunate' effect of making Hume's philosophy 'even more irrationalist than in the Reid interpretation'[38]. Kemp Smith had made this error, Capaldi thought, because he had failed to see 'the real connection of psychology and logic in Hume'[39]. However, once one came to see that Hume's epistemological naturalism was grounded in his 'Newtonian' thesis regarding the role that 'laws of association' play in the mental world, then one would come to see that Hume's theory that our passions arise from various principles of mental association is an essential part of Hume's science of human nature, not a hindrance for Hume's readers to overcome.[40] Indeed, by 1975, Capaldi could write that:

[36] See esp. Páll Árdal, *Passion and Value in Hume's Treatise*, Edinburgh University Press, 1966, pp. 109-47.
[37] Nicholas Capaldi, *David Hume, The Newtonian Philosopher*, Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975, (*The Newtonian Philosopher*) pp. 130-50.
[38] Capaldi, *The Newtonian Philosopher*, p. 229.
[39] Capaldi, *The Newtonian Philosopher*, p. 229.
[40] See here, Capaldi, *The Newtonian Philosopher*, pp. 49-70. In arguing like this Capaldi can be seen to be following Laird, who was the first to stress the significance of Newton for Hume, or that 'Hume meant, in short, to become the Newton of the Human Mind'; Laird, *Hume's Philosophy of Human Nature*, p. 29.

> Book II of the *Treatise* is in many respects the most important for exemplifying the major themes of Hume's philosophy. By its discussion of the mechanism of association it serves as a confirmation of Hume's explanation of the mechanics of causal belief. At the same time, it prepares the way for Hume's moral theory by explaining the mechanism of sympathy. Again, it serves as an explanation for the concept of the self which proved so problematic in Book I. Finally, by outlining his theory of human motivation Hume completes his project of undermining both the rationalist model in general and rationalist moral theories. Thus, an understanding of the passions is essential for an understanding of all the philosophical issues in Hume's *Treatise*.[41]

This claim, now forty-five years old, gives a good general description of the scholarly outlook that has characterised the study of Book Two ever since: regarding which I refer the reader to Elizabeth Radcliffe's excellent overview of the current state of the art regarding what she calls '*Hume's Psychology of the Passions*' (2015).[42] Indeed it is arguable that, at the present time, Hume's intellectual stock – and especially shares in his philosophy of the passions – has never been higher.

There is, however, one particular line of argument that has come to the fore as a means of assessing, and asserting, the importance of Hume's philosophy of the passions. This line of argument is nicely foreshadowed by Capaldi's claim that with Book Two 'Hume completes his project of undermining both the rationalist

[41] Capaldi, *The Newtonian Philosopher*, p. 130.
[42] Elizabeth S. Radcliffe, 'Hume's Psychology of the Passions: The Literature and Future Directions', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 53:4, 2015, (*Hume's Psychology*) pp. 565-605.

model in general and rationalist moral theories'; yet its full articulation is first given in Annette Baier's book *A Progress of Sentiments* (1991).[43]

Baier's fundamental assertion here is that Books One and Two of the *Treatise* are linked together by a narrative dimension. Baier's core claim – in her own words – is that with his depiction of his sceptical crisis at the end of Book One, Hume:

> enacts for us the turn he wants us to imitate, a turn from a one-sided reliance on intellect and its methods of proceeding to an attempt to use, in our philosophy, *all* the capacities of the human mind: memory, passion and sentiment as well as a chastened intellect. That is what Hume attempts from Book Two onwards – not only are passions his topic there, but his approach to them is to be guided by experience-informed passion, and he recommends that his readers indulge their sentiments when they join him in his pursuit of philosophy "in this careless manner".[44]

On Baier's view, Hume's *Treatise* is something of a three-act epistemological drama, in that, '[l]ike Descartes in his *Meditations,* so Hume in his *Treatise* stages a thinker's dramatic development from inadequate and doubt-inviting approaches to more satisfactory reflections'[45]. Hume's genius, however, was to have shown that what Baier calls the 'Cartesian' conception of rationality is self-undermining, and that the recognition of this ought to push us towards an 'embodied', 'social' conception of ourselves as rational beings: which is to say, towards a philosophical self-conception that we, and others, endorse upon

[43] For similar ideas, articulated at a similar time see, Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, 'Pride produces the idea of self': Hume on moral agency, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 68:3, 1990, pp. 255-269.
[44] Annette Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments*, Harvard University Press, 1991, p. 1.
[45] Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments*, p. vii.

reflection, and, as such, is capable of withstanding sceptical challenges of the type that Hume encounters at the end of Book One.[46]

Baier herself could be rather careless with the details of Hume's philosophy. Yet she gives a compelling account of the general intellectual thrust of the *Treatise*, and a number of later scholars have stepped in to fill out the specifics.[47] The most notable adjustment of Baier's basic position, in my view, is the recent turn towards understanding the relationship between Books One and Two of the *Treatise* in light of the broader philosophical concern with the relation between reason and passion, rather than through Baier's more narrowly epistemological framing. James Harris puts the point succinctly when he says that:

> Missing from Baier's account, however, is full acknowledgement of the magnitude of the problem that Hume has created for himself as he moves on to Book Two, a problem that only comes into focus when one considers standard treatments of the relation between reason and passion. What Hume knew, and what his readers knew, was that the passions were usually taken to be a problem that required reason for its solution. How, without governance by reason, could the passions supply anything other than distraction and disturbance?[48]

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[46] For Baier's final articulation of her position see Annette Baier, 'Reflexivity and Sentiment in Hume's Philosophy', in *The Oxford Handbook of Hume* (ed. Paul Russell), Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 54-9.

[47] See here: Lilli Alanen, 'Reflection and Ideas in Hume's Account of the Passions', in *Persons and Passions: Essays in Honour of Annette Baie*r, (eds. Joyce Jenkins, Jennifer Whiting, and Christopher Williams), University of Notre Dame Press, 2005, (*Persons and Passions*) pp. 117-43; Donald Ainslie, 'Sympathy and the Unity of Hume's Idea of Self', in *Persons and* Passions, pp. 143-73; Janet Broughton, 'Hume's Voyage' in *Persons and Passions*, pp. 174-91; for a book-length study in this vein, see Jacqueline Taylor, *Reflecting Subjects: Passion, Sympathy, and Society in Hume's Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2015 (*Reflecting Subjects*), pp. 1-31.

[48] James A. Harris, '"A Compleat Chain of Reasoning"; Hume's Project in A Treatise of Human Nature, Books 1 and 2', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 109, 2009, (*Compleat Chain*) p. 135.

The answer that Harris, and others, propose to this question is that with Book Two of the *Treatise* Hume intends show that the passions were perfectly capable of governing themselves;[49] such that it might become, as Harris says, 'permissible to talk of the *self-regulation* of the passions', although 'with the proviso that it be understood that the self-regulation in question operates in the context of the social realm taken as a whole, rather than within the breasts of individual men and women'[50].

This reading of Hume's intentions, and thus of the central importance of Hume's philosophy of the passions to his philosophy of human nature, has much to recommend it. Not least of which is that it helps us make sense of a claim that Hume makes in the *Abstract* to Books One and Two, which he anonymously published in the period between their publication and the publication of Book Three. Here Hume reflects upon the nature of the project that he had set out for himself, i.e. the development of a comprehensive 'science of human nature' including volumes on logic, the passions, morals, politics, and criticism. So as to assess the author's (i.e. his own) progress, Hume reflects that:

> *The sole end of* logic *is to explain the principles and operations of our reasoning faculty, and the nature of our ideas;* morals *and* criticism *regard our tastes and sentiments; and* politics *consider men as united in society, and dependent on each other*. This treatise therefore of human nature seems intended for a system of the sciences. The

[49] See here, also Jane L. McIntyre, 'Hume's 'New and extraordinary' account of the passions', *The Blackwell Guide to Hume's Treatise*, (ed. Saul Traiger), Malden, MA: Blackwell, (2006) pp. 199-215.
[50] Harris, *Compleat Chain*, p. 132.

> author has finished what regards logic, and has laid the foundations of the other parts in his account of the passions.
>
> (T *Abstract*; SBN 646)

On this picture of Hume's *Treatise* philosophy, which has his own endorsement, whatever Hume had hoped to achieve with Book One – both of naturalistic and sceptical intention – is achieved with his explanation of 'the principles and operations of our reasoning faculty, and the nature of our ideas'. Book Two then serves as 'the foundation' of his projected accounts of 'morals', 'criticism' and 'politics': the unifying feature of which is that they account for the regulation of human behaviour in society; which is to say, of our natural sociability.

3. My Gambit

What this generally accurate and textually robust conception of Hume's philosophy of the passions lacks, however, is a sense in which Hume's philosophy of the passions, considered as whole, might have an independent importance of its own. For while particular elements of Hume's philosophy of the passions are often thought to have wider philosophical relevance of some sort or another,[51] Book Two *on the whole* is understood to be important only to the extent that it contributes to Hume's larger philosophical designs; be they epistemological, or moral, or a combination of the two. Here one might object that Hume himself says '*[t]he subjects of the* understanding *and* passions *make a*

[51] Of particular note here is Hume's "non-cognitivism" regarding emotions. See here, for instance, Mark Collier, 'Hume's Science of Emotions: Feeling Theory without Tears', *Hume Studies*, 37:1, 2011, pp. 3-18; see also, Jesse Prinz, 'Hume and Cognitive Science', in *The Oxford Handbook of Hume* (ed. Paul Russell), Oxford University Press, 2016, esp. pp. 781-5.

compleat chain of reasoning by themselves' (T *Advertisement* (1739 – p. 2), SBN xii), and that, as such, he is inviting us to consider his writings on the passions as part of some larger project. To this my reply is yes, he does do this, but this is no reason not to study his philosophy of the passions in its own right: it certainty has not stopped anyone studying Hume's Book One epistemology in its own right.

Again one might object that Hume *himself* gave us leave to study his epistemology, as well as his moral philosophy, in their own right. He did so by recasting Book One as *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding* (1748) and Book Three as *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751).[52] Both these later works are substantially similar to their original sources, but there are significant differences, and these differences make Hume's epistemology and moral philosophy worthy of study in their own right. Book Two, on the other hand, was republished as a dissertation amongst other dissertations, and without any especially significant alterations. Even Hume, it would seem, did not have much to say about his philosophy of the passions considered in its own right. Maybe so; but, again, this is no good reason not to study Book Two in its own right. Indeed, what can we hope to learn from the *Dissertation on the Passions* without a sense of the independent philosophical importance of Book Two?

[52] *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding* was renamed *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* in 1758 when published in the collection *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*, A New Edition, London: Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand; and A. Kincaid and A. Donaldson, at Edinburgh, 1758.

Lastly, one might claim that we ought not to view any part of Hume's *Treatise* in isolation from the others: that they have such a peculiar unity that no one part can be fully understood in abstraction from the rest. In fact, whatever we have learnt about Hume's *Treatise* philosophy in the last sixty-odd years can be attributed to our having developed an increasingly sophisticated sense of the interconnectedness of its parts. Again, I take the point, but to acknowledge this is not to say that the different parts of the *Treatise* cannot be profitably separated from each other. We might learn something new about Book One, or Book Three, or both, by separating out Book Two from between them. Likewise, we might find that crucial aspects of Book Two are overshadowed when Book Two is read in light of Hume's epistemological and moral concerns.

For example: there is a pronounced tendency within recent Hume scholarship to view Book Two of the *Treatise* as a "sheerly positive" contribution to our understanding of mankind's natural sociability – to steal an idea from Kemp Smith. With the exception of Hume's denial of 'free-will', and of the motivating power of reason (which themselves make up but three of Book Two's thirty-four sections) Hume's philosophy of the passions is thought to largely eschew sceptical or otherwise destructive concerns.[53] In this regard the contemporary study of Book Two is very different to the contemporary study of Book One. For while it is now generally accepted that Hume's intentions in Book One were not "sheerly negative", it is still widely accepted that Book One has a pronounced destructive edge: that Hume's intention was both to found his own positive

[53] This is my assessment of the literature on Hume's philosophy of the passions considered on the whole. It is not without exception, but it is certainly the general tenor. Again, Radcliffe's *Hume's Psychology* gives a good sense of how things currently stand.

science of man, and to discredit those of others, and that the destructive character of Hume's 'logic' is not constrained to the sceptical considerations that he entertains in Part Four of Book One, but permeates the whole thing.[54]

Might not we also find that Book Two has a destructive edge, and that this also permeates the whole of Hume's philosophy of the passions? If we restrict ourselves to a view of Book Two on which Hume's philosophy of the passions is either the 'solution' (Radcliffe) to sceptical problems that Hume has 'created for himself' (Harris), or is the 'foundation' (Hume) of his theory of morals, then we are unlikely to give such questions the attention they deserve. Yet there are questions there to be asked, and there is enough evidence to suggest that the answer is yes. Indeed, such questions have already begun to be asked, although not in any systematic manner.[55] My aim in what follows is to rectify this situation.[56]

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[54] See here, for instance, Peter Kail, 'On Hume's Appropriation of Malebranche: Causation and Self', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 16:1, 2007, pp. 55-80; Peter Kail, 'Hume, Malebranche and "Rationalism"', *Philosophy*, 83, 2008, pp. 311-332; and Paul Russell, *The Riddle of Hume's Treatise: Skepticism, Naturalism, and Irreligion*, Oxford University Press, 2008.

[55] See here, Stephen Buckle, 'Hume on the Passions', *Philosophy*, 87, 2012, pp. 189–213 and Taylor, *Reflecting Subjects*, pp. 1-31.

[56] Insofar as this is my agenda, this is a deliberately selective study of Hume's philosophy of the passions. Indeed such selectiveness is my rationale for titling the work '*A* Study *of Hume's Philosophy of the Passions…*'. One consequence of my systematic focus on what I see as the 'destructive edge' of Hume's philosophy of the passions is that I say relatively little about Hume's positive contributions to our understanding of mankind's natural sociability. The most considerable omission here is that I say next to nothing about sections 2.2.6-10 (SBN 366-393). These sections, which address the passions of benevolence, anger, compassion (pity), malice, envy, respect and contempt, are some of the most important for understanding Hume's conception of mankind's natural sociability, and any account of Hume's philosophy of the passions that has pretensions to completeness is obliged to discuss them in detail. However, to the extent that Hume's arguments in these sections contribute to what I see as his destructive agenda (which I will outline presently) they can, I claim, be treated along the same lines as sections 2.2.3-5, which I discuss extensively in Chapter Three. Another consequence is that I spend relatively little (if any) time engaging with the secondary literature on Hume's philosophy of the passions. It is immensely helpful that there is a large and rapidly increasing body of scholarly work on Hume's philosophy of the passions. Yet I have made it my priority to attempt a reading of Hume's philosophy of the passions that is able to unify its sometimes quite disparate threads, and I have been less concerned to position my views against those of others.

To this end I forward a thesis regarding the unity of Hume's philosophy of the passions, as set out in Book Two of the *Treatise*. In particular, I claim that Hume's writings on the passions display a considerable unity of purpose when read as an attempt to avoid (1) favourably comparing human sociability and actions to animal sociability and actions, and thus supposing that human beings are essentially superior to animals, and (2) unfavourably comparing human sociability and actions to an imagined ideal of perfect wisdom, and thus supposing that human sociability and actions are inferior versions of analogous divine capacities for sociability and action. Hume attempts this, I claim, by giving efficient causal explanations of man's passions and will that are equally applicable to animal passions and volitions – 'making a just allowance for our superior knowledge and understanding' (T 2.1.12.5, SBN 326). His aim in doing so, I conclude, was to displace human beings from the centre of the moral universe by revealing their essential similarity with animals, but to do so without conceptualising this shift as a fall from grace.[57]

This is a reading of Hume's intentions that, I believe, arises from the close study of Book Two, situated firmly within its most relevant intellectual contexts.[58] I will

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Of course, any account of Hume's philosophy of the passions with pretensions to completeness is obliged to discuss what others have had to say about it; but why waste the chance to work out what you want to say first, and then position yourself amongst others later?

[57] For a conception of Hume's science of human nature along these broad lines see Peter Kail, The Sceptical Beast in the Beastly Sceptic: Human Nature in Hume', *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, 70, 2012, pp. 219-31.

[58] As it happens, the intellectual contexts within which I situate Hume's writings on the passions are predominantly Anglophone. For the most part this reflects my belief (by no means uncommon) that Bernard Mandeville and Francis Hutcheson were the two most significant influences upon Hume's choice of topics in Book Two, and they wrote in English, and primarily for a British audience. It is also the case that when it comes to the influence of French writers upon Hume's philosophy of the passions - as distinct from his epistemological writings - I

give an overview of my argument presently, yet, before doing so, it is worth noting that this way of viewing Hume's designs finds an articulation (of sorts) in Hume's essay titled '*Of the Dignity of Human Nature*'; first published in 1941, less than a year after the publication of Book Three, and only a few years after the publication of Book Two.[59] In this essay Hume divides 'the learned world' into two 'sects'[60]. Both these sects, Hume claims, 'are apt to make a comparison between men and animals, the only creatures endowed with thought that fall under our senses'[61]. The first, however, goes on to form an 'exalted' notion of human nature, on the basis of man's patently superior capacities for thought and action.[62] The other sect, by contrast, set out to 'destroy this conclusion'[63].

The means by which the second sect attempts to 'destroy' the hubris of the first is by either (a) 'making an unfair representation of the case, and insisting only upon the weaknesses of human nature', or by (b) 'forming a new and secret comparison between man and beings of the most perfect wisdom'[64]. More precisely, Hume finds that once this second 'secret' comparison is in place, members of the second sect of philosophers are 'apt to entertain a contemptible

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believe that Hume was mostly interested in their insightful application of various causal-explanatory principles, such as sympathy and comparison, but also self-interest, to explain various aspects of human sociability; and that insofar as Hume was concerned to overthrow the dogmatic religious assumptions behind the anthropologies of Malebranche, or of La Rochefoucauld, or Bayle, much of what one might say by placing Hume's writings against these thinkers can be said (and said more exactly) by placing them against the writings of Mandeville, and to a lesser, but not insignificant extent, against Hutcheson.

[59] James Harris remarks that 'Of the Dignity of Human Nature', is very hard not to read as a kind of supplement to the *Treatise*' and I agree (Harris, Hume, p. 163). Notably, this essay was retitled '*Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature*' in 1770 when published in the collection *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*, A New Edition, 4 Vols., London: Printed for T. Cadell (Successor to Mr. Millar) in the Strand; and A. Kincaid and A. Donaldson, at Edinburgh, 1770.

[60] David Hume, *Essays, Moral, Political and Literary*, (ed. Eugene Miller), Indiana: Liberty Press, 1985, (*Essays*) p. 80.

[61] Hume, *Essays*, p. 82.

[62] Hume, *Essays*, p. 82.

[63] Hume, *Essays*, p. 82.

[64] Hume, *Essays*, pp. 82-3.

notion of our species in general', given how far we fall short of this divine standard.[65] This being the case, the 'wide difference' that everybody may observe between man and animals, comes to seem 'of little moment'.[66] As such, while these philosophers recognise man's superior capacities for thought and action, vis-à-vis animals, they remain bent on exposing what they regard as the 'deformity' of human nature, vis-à-vis divine nature.

Simply put, my thesis is that with his philosophy of the passions in Book Two, Hume attempts to set himself apart from both these sects of philosophers, by giving an impartial estimate of what human beings are observed to be like. Namely, I claim that, on the one hand, Hume sides with the second sect of philosophers insofar as he sets out to 'destroy' the notion that human beings are essentially superior to animals. Yet, on the other, that Hume seeks to avoid the mistakes of both (a) and (b) by giving a 'fair' representation of mankind's strengths, vis-à-vis animals, as well as our weaknesses. Such a representation is, amongst other things, one that fastidiously avoids making any comparison between human beings, as we find them, and what we imagine are 'beings of the most perfect wisdom'.

There is a broader question here as to what Hume might have seen as the benefits of his putting forth an impartial conception of human nature, freed from misleading comparisons with animals and God. This is not something that I seek to address in this thesis, but I have little doubt that Hume believed a science of

[65] Hume, *Essays*, p. 83.
[66] Hume, *Essays*, p. 83.

human nature that was free from religious dogmas and ancient sophistries was a necessary means to the end of stable government, economic prosperity, and the flourishing of the arts and other sciences. At the same time, however, I am of the opinion that Hume saw a close connection between an impartial self-understanding and personal well-being – as his fascinating early letter to an unnamed physician attests.[67] And while I would not go so far as to say that Hume envisaged his science of human nature as a philosophical therapy, either for himself or others, it seems fair to say that he considered religious dogmas and ancient sophistries as destabilising forces, both across society, and within one's mind.[68]

Indeed, there is a further question here as to whether Hume's *Treatise* philosophy, and especially his philosophy of the passions in Book Two, might be viewed as a kind of self-portrait writ large. Such that Hume's philosophy of the passions – with its twin struggles against ancient sophistries and religious dogmas – is not simply one philosophy amongst others, but is in some important sense *Hume's philosophy* of the passions, and cannot be properly articulated, nor properly interpreted, without articulating and interpreting it as an expression of Hume's personal philosophical character (and of a philosophical character in the early stages of its development at that). Again, I do not address such issues here: my aim is to set down enough of an interpretive base that these sorts of questions become worth asking. But I, for one, think that they are worth asking.

[67] See here David Hume. *Letters of David Hume (Vol. 1)*, (ed J. Y. T. Greig), Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 13-17. I discuss this letter and its relevance to Hume's philosophical self-conception in Chapter One.
[68] Towards this point, see T 1.4.7.13, SBN 271-2.

4. Argument Overview

In Chapter One, *Marching on the Capital: Hume's Experimental Science of Man*, I set out an interpretation of Hume's self-described 'attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects' (T *Title*, SBN xi). My aim here is to develop a reading of Hume's experimental moral philosophy that is capable of sustaining my claim that Book Two is unified by a destructive agenda. To this end, I argue that Hume quite plausibly modelled his conception of experimental moral philosophy upon Francis Bacon's characterisation of experimental natural philosophy as an attempt to liberate knowledge of the natural world from its enslavement to various 'sects' of false philosophers – the *Sophistic*, the *Superstitious*, and the *Empirical* – and to do so on the epistemic authority of experience and observation alone. With this point in place, I then claim that with his broadly Baconian rejection of ancient and religious epistemic authorities, Hume was like Hobbes, yet – similar to those whom he identified as his fellow moral experimentalists – Hume rejected Hobbes' *Empiricism*,[69] and sought to develop a truly impartial account of human nature, based on the authority of experience and observation alone.

In Chapter Two, *Pride and Prejudice: Mandeville without the Moralising*, I begin to document Hume's attempt to liberate the science of human nature from philosophical prejudices through his science of the passions. Hume's first target here, I claim, was Bernard Mandeville's attempt to reduce all our self-regarding

[69] Here and below I will capitalise the words 'Empirical', Empiricist', and 'Empiricism' when specifically referring to what Bacon calls the 'Empirical' sect of false philosophers and their methods (I will discuss this 'sect' of philosophers and their methods in detail in Chapter One). When used without capitals I intend these words to have their contemporary meanings.

passions to what he called 'self-liking'. In particular, I claim that Hume's fundamental aim in his engagement with Mandeville was to liberate Mandeville's experimental account of our self-regarding affections from its reliance upon the Christian dogma of the Fall. To this end, I argue that Hume's 'indirect' account of our self-regarding affections functions to divorce Mandeville's astute psychological observations regarding pride, shame, and the love of fame, from the moralised conception of self-worth that Hume believed Mandeville had built into his account of 'self-liking'. Furthermore, I contend that Hume understood this moralised conception of self-worth to have been conditioned by the religious belief that human beings, as we find them, are essentially contemptible, compared to an imagined ideal of perfect benevolence. Hume's engagement with Mandeville, then, was to turn Mandeville's commitment to giving an impartial account of human nature back upon Mandeville himself.

In Chapter Three, *Difficulties with Love: Resisting Hutcheson's Ancient Prejudices*, I turn to examine Hume's account of our other-regarding passions in Part Two of Book Two. Here I argue that Hume's account of love and hatred, on the whole, aims to eradicate the ancient belief in humanity's essential superiority over animals from experimental moral science. In particular, I contend that Hume's overall design with his 'indirect' account of the passions of love and hatred, as well as their different 'mixtures', was to discredit Francis Hutcheson's attempt to ground this ancient belief experimentally: by his positing a number of innate perceptual faculties, or 'internal senses', that mark essential differences between man and animals, and that serve to explain why certain other-regarding affections are unique to human beings. With this point in place, I claim that

Hume's account of what he calls 'indirect' passions – which he himself describes as initiating a Copernican revolution in moral philosophy – ultimately functions to displace humans from the centre of the moral universe by revealing their essential similarity to animals; but to do so without conceptualising this shift as a fall from grace.

In Chapter Four, *Liberating the Will: Hume against the 'Metaphysicians'*, I give a reading of Hume's intentions in the relatively neglected middle sections of Book Two, Part Three, '*Of the will and direct passions*'; namely, *Treatise* 2.3.4-8. Here I argue that when read as unit, these sections of Hume's account of the will target Locke and Hutcheson's shared conception of 'liberty' as an agential power over the understanding, unique to intellectual natures, that allows human beings to suspend the volitional pursuit of the objects of their desires. Having made out this claim, I consider the role of these sections within Hume's account of the will as a whole, that is, across *Treatise* 2.3.1-8. Here I argue that the function of *Treatise* 2.3.4-8 within Hume's overall account of the will is to dispense with Locke and Hutcheson's experimental version of the general philosophical fallacy that mankind's moral nature is tied to an essential difference between man and animals.

In Chapter Five, *A Curious Conclusion*, I examine the final section of Book Two, in which Hume gives an account of '*curiosity, or the love of truth*'. Here I argue that Hume's account of this passion targets two common philosophical beliefs regarding the origin of curiosity in human nature. The first of these is that curiosity is an innate desire for truth that marks an essential difference between

human nature and animal natures, while the second is that curiosity, as we commonly find it, is a vicious desire to appear learned that is evidence of man's essential inferiority to divine nature, in which a virtuous love of truth is perfectly instantiated. It is my contention that Hume attacks these two beliefs by, on the one hand, revealing that the origin of curiosity in human nature can be traced to principles that are common to man and beast, and, on the other, by demonstrating that a vicious desire to appear learned arises from the same principles as a benevolent love of truth. In doing so, I claim, Hume neither favourably compares curious human behaviour to uncurious animal behaviour, nor unfavourably compares curious human behaviour with the ideal of a perfectly virtuous love of knowledge; thus he presents an account of the origin of mankind's love of truth that has a genuine claim to impartiality.

These five chapters together constitute my argument for the claim that Hume's philosophy of the passions, as set out in Book Two of the *Treatise*, is unified by a destructive agenda. Most generally, my claim is that Hume attempts to liberate the science of human nature from the false philosophical self-conceptions generated by superstitious religious beliefs, ancient philosophical sophistries, and insufficiently careful attention to experience. Having presented my grounds for making this claim, I conclude with some brief speculations as to how this understanding of the philosophical importance of Hume's philosophy of the passions might be developed further. In particular, I suggest that my general interpretation of Hume's philosophical goals, as exemplified in his philosophy of the passions, promises to shed new light upon our understanding of Hume's

epistemological concerns in Book One, and the moral philosophy that he develops in Book Three.

1. Marching on the Capital: Hume's Experimental Science of Man

1. Introduction

My aim in this chapter is to develop a reading of Hume's experimental moral philosophy that is capable of sustaining my claim that Book Two is unified by a destructive agenda. The place to begin here is with the *Introduction* to the *Treatise*, in which Hume first sketches the contours of his overall philosophical project. After a brief preamble bemoaning 'the present imperfect state of the sciences' (T *Intro*; SBN xiii), Hume opens with the assertion that 'all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to human nature' (T *Intro*; SBN xv). Then, going further, he contends that all the sciences 'are in some measure dependent upon the science of MAN' (T *Intro*; SBN xv). In this Hume includes both those sciences that he believes concern man most intimately, namely, '*Logic, Morals, Criticism, and Politics*' (T *Intro*; SBN xvi), and those that he regards as being more remote, that is, '*Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Natural Religion*' (T *Intro*; SBN xv).

Given that all the sciences depend upon the science of man, Hume boldly announces his intention to:

> leave the tedious lingring method, which we have hitherto followed, and instead of taking now and then a castle or village on the frontier, to march up directly to the capital or center of these sciences, to human nature itself; which being once masters of, we may every where else hope for an easy victory. From this station we may extend our conquests over all those sciences, which more intimately concern human life, and may afterwards proceed at leisure to discover more fully those, which are the objects of pure curiosity. There is no question of importance, whose decision is not compriz'd in the science of man; and there is none, which can be decided with any certainty, before we become acquainted with that science. In pretending therefore to explain the principles of human nature, we in effect propose a compleat system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any security.
>
> (T *Intro*; SBN xvi)

Having laid out this ambitious plan, Hume asserts that the only 'solid foundation' we can give to the science of human nature is 'experience and observation' and he aligns himself with 'some late philosophers in England' who had recently begun the task of putting the science of man on this 'new footing' (T *Intro*; SBN xvi-ii). In doing so, Hume makes it very clear that his self-described 'attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects' (T *Title*; SBN xi) is part of a methodological 'reformation' of the moral sciences, in which 'we must endeavour to render all our principles as universal as possible, by tracing up our experiments to the utmost, and explaining all effects from the fewest and simplest causes', but where ''tis certain, we cannot go beyond experience; and any hypothesis, that pretends to discover the ultimate qualities

of human nature, ought at first to be rejected as presumptuous and chimerical' (T *Intro*; SBN xvii).

It is obvious from these passages that Hume envisioned his philosophy as a system of the sciences in the modern mould, in which the aim is to discover general explanations for several phenomena, and to do so by appealing to the fewest and simplest causes. Not only this, but it is obvious that Hume considered the science of mankind – of man's understanding and passions – as the foundation of his system, and that he considered experience and observation to be the foundation of this science. This being the case, it is fitting that the inductive science of man that Hume develops in the *Treatise* has been the focus of the collective scholarly effort to rescue Hume's philosophy as a constructive endeavour.[70]

This said, however, it is just as important that Hume regards the 'capital' of the sciences – 'the science of MAN' – as occupied territory, and that he views his 'direct' method of approach upon the science of human nature as a 'conquest'. As such, for Hume to say that the sciences of '*Logic, Morals, Criticism, and Politics*' depend upon 'the science of MAN' is not simply a claim about the structure of moral knowledge, it is also a claim about how to gain control over moral knowledge. For if we are able to 'master' the knowledge of human nature, then

[70] The study of Hume as constructive thinker, as opposed to a fundamentally skeptical philosopher, can be traced back to two articles by Norman Kemp-Smith, published in Mind in 1905: 'The Naturalism of David Hume (I)', *Mind* 14.54 (April 1905): 149-73, and 'The Naturalism of David Hume (II)', *Mind* 14.55 (July 1905): 335-47. While the exact nature of Hume's constructive project is a matter of continued debate, the scholarly consensus from the mid-20th Century onwards has been that Hume envisaged his *Treatise* as contributing to the development of an inductive science of human nature, and not as a skeptical attempt to undermine such an enterprise.

we may 'hope for an easy victory' in those subjects that are most intimately related to the science of man. And with power over the moral sciences comes the 'leisure' to study 'the objects of pure curiosity' – i.e. '*mathematics*, *natural philosophy*, *and natural religion*' – without the threat of insurrection.

From this perspective, Hume's decision to ground his science of human nature upon experience and observation is as much about overthrowing existing philosophical authorities as it is about establishing a secure epistemic foundation for his system of the sciences. This is not to say that Hume's scientific ambitions are secondary to his sense of intellectual conquest. Rather, my contention is that Hume's attempt to ground a true science of man upon experience and observation is simultaneously an attempt to liberate mankind's self-conception from the prejudices of philosophers. On this picture, Hume's sense of intellectual conquest is what gives shape to his scientific ambitions, and the success of Hume's science of man can be measured by its power to keep false conceptions of human nature at bay.

In what follows I flesh out this conception of Hume's *Treatise* philosophy. To this end I begin by considering the comparison that Hume makes between experimental moral philosophy, as he understands it, and the experimental tradition in natural philosophy inaugurated by Francis Bacon (section 2). I suggest that this comparison is instructive in light of Bacon's characterisation of his philosophy as an attempt to liberate knowledge of the natural world from its enslavement to various 'sects' of false philosophers – the *Sophistic*, the *Superstitious*, and the *Empirical* – and to do so on the epistemic authority of

experience and observation alone. I then draw upon Hume's *Abstract* of the *Treatise* to claim that Hume's conception of experimental moral philosophy was a broadly Baconian one; in which contempt for false philosophical authorities is as much a characteristic of the experimental method of reasoning as respect for experience is.

Having made this claim, I then turn to the question of Hume's relation to Thomas Hobbes – Bacon's one-time amanuensis. For if Hume did conceive of experimental moral philosophy as an attempt to liberate the science of man from the authority of false philosophers, then it is reasonable to think that Hobbes served as an important model; as Hobbes too was committed to the overthrow of established epistemic authorities in the study of human nature, especially the authority of ancient metaphysicians and superstitious clergy. In light of this, it is notable that Hume leaves Hobbes off his list of 'late philosophers in England' whom he regards as his fellow moral experimentalists. Thus there is a general question as to what Hume made of Hobbes' moral philosophy.

In answer to this question I argue that Hume regarded Hobbes as a false philosopher of what Bacon called the 'Empirical' sect, and that he sought to set his own *experimental* moral philosophy against Hobbes' *Empiricism* (section 3). In particular, I contend that Hume envisioned his experimental moral philosophy – and indeed experimental moral philosophy in general – as an attempt to move Hobbes' Baconian programme in moral philosophy beyond Hobbes' own Empiricist prejudices. With this claim in place, I then consider the question of what sets Hume's experimental moral philosophy apart from that of his fellow

moral experimentalists (section 4). Here I claim that the distinguishing characteristic of Hume's experimental moral philosophy is his 'doctrine' of ensuring that his hypotheses regarding human nature apply equally to animals; a doctrine designed to safeguard his science of man from his own partiality towards his own ingenious philosophical inventions, by resting their truth upon the broadest available notion of experience.

2. A Reformation in Moral Philosophy

Having announced his intention to march upon the science of human nature as upon the capital of a kingdom, and to do so by appealing to experience and observation, Hume muses that:

> 'Tis no astonishing reflection to consider, that the application of experimental philosophy to moral subjects should come after that to natural at the distance of above a whole century; since we find in fact, that there was about the same interval betwixt the origins of these sciences; and that reckoning from THALES to SOCRATES, the space of time is nearly equal to that betwixt my Lord Bacon and some late philosophers in *England*, who have begun to put the science of man on a new footing, and have engaged the attention, and excited the curiosity of the public.
>
> (T *Intro*; SBN xvi-ii)

Hume then asserts that this 'improvement in the science of man' ought to bring even greater glory to England than Bacon's improvement of natural philosophy had, both because of 'the greater importance of that science [the science of

human nature], as well as the necessity it lay under of such a reformation' (T *Intro*; SBN xvii).

That Hume ranks moral philosophy of greater importance than natural philosophy is part and parcel of his view that the science of human nature is the 'capital or center' of the sciences. More telling, however, is that Hume goes on to assert that moral philosophy lies under a 'necessity' of reformation because of 'that error, into which so many have fallen, of imposing their conjectures and hypotheses on the world for the most certain principles' (T *Intro*; SBN xviii). This claim provides an interesting insight into Hume's thinking because the error of imposing hypotheses as certainties is not one that he ever suggests is unique to the moral sciences, rather, it would seem that this is the error that Hume takes Bacon to have exposed with regards to natural philosophy, yet which still persists in moral philosophy, save for a few 'late philosophers in England' – he names Locke, Shaftesbury, Mandeville, Hutcheson and Butler – who had sought to ground the science of man on observation and experience (T *Intro*; SBN xvii).

This reading fits nicely with what is known about experimental philosophy at the time that Hume was writing. In particular, it is notable that when the *Treatise* was first published, Bacon's own prescriptions for generating scientific truths were no longer current amongst self-consciously 'experimental' philosophers.[71] At the same time, the experimental method of reasoning remained closely associated with Bacon insofar as modern-day experimentalists were concerned

[71] For details here see Peter Anstey, Philosophy of Experiment in Early Modern England: The Case of Bacon, Boyle and Hooke. *Early Science and Medicine*, 19(2) (2014), 103-132 and Guido Giglioni, Francis Bacon, in Peter R. Anstey (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 41-71.

to distinguish their methods from what they pejoratively called 'speculative' philosophy.[72] More precisely, experimental philosophers understood themselves to be pursuing a method of natural philosophical inquiry, initiated by Bacon, in which the authority to determine what ought to be believed was accorded to experience and observation alone. This experimental method of reasoning was contrasted with the speculative method of reasoning, closely associated with Cartesian natural philosophy, in which epistemic authority was accorded to what were variously called 'hypotheses', 'conjectures', 'maxims' and 'theories'. Speculative philosophers, as depicted by experimentalists, allowed speculation to trump experience when determining what ought to be believed, and would rather reconcile contradictory appearances to a theory, than treat them as grounds to reject the theory.

This being the case, it would seem that when Hume laments 'conjectures and hypotheses' being treated as 'the most certain principles' in moral philosophy, and compares this to pre-Baconian natural philosophy, that he is deliberately employing the Bacon-inspired anti-speculative rhetoric that was current amongst experimental philosophers. At the same time, however, this raises the question as to whether Bacon's thought exerted any substantive influence over Hume's conception of the experimental method of reasoning. Or whether Hume's references to Bacon were little more than the standard anti-speculative (and primarily anti-Cartesian) rhetoric espoused by experimental naturalists.

[72] See Peter Anstey and Alberto Vanzo, The Origins of early modern experimental philosophy, *Intellectual History Review*, 22(4) (2012), 499-518; and Peter Anstey, Experimental versus Speculative Natural Philosophy, in Peter Anstey and John Schuster (Eds.), *The Science of Nature in the Seventeenth Century: Patterns of Changes in Early Modern Natural Philosophy*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2005, pp. 215-242.

As with most questions regarding Hume's early intellectual influences, it is difficult to be sure whether Bacon did influence Hume in a substantive way. Although we do at least know that Bacon's *Novum Organum* was in the Physiological Library that Hume subscribed to as a university student,[73] and thus that he could conceivably have come across Bacon's attempt to establish a new science at quite a young age. Still, given that Hume chose to describe his science of man as an attempt to conquer the capital of the sciences, it is interesting that when Bacon speaks of his project to liberate the mind from the 'vain and deceitful theories' of 'false philosophers'[74], that he frequently uses the language of combat and conquest.

More precisely, Bacon considered false philosophical theories to be one of the four 'Idols of the Mind' that he regarded as obstacles to the generation of new knowledge.[75] Unlike Bacon's other Idols, however, which were innate intellectual dispositions, false philosophical theories were 'extrinsic' Idols, which is to say that they had somehow 'migrated into the minds of men', either 'from the dogmas and sects of the philosophers or from misguided laws of demonstration', and had become stuck there.[76] Indeed, Bacon believed that such theories were often forcefully imposed by philosophers, whose 'depraved demonstrations are

[73] See David Fate Norton and Mary J Norton (eds.), *A Treatise of Human Nature: Volume 2.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007, p. 980 and p. 1017.
[74] Francis Bacon. *The Oxford Francis Bacon, Vol. 11: The Instauratio magna Part II: Novum organum and Associated Texts* (Graham Rees and Maria Wakely (eds.)), Oxford University Press, 2004, pp.93-99 (I ss. 60-62).
[75] See Bacon, *Novum Organum*, pp. 83-99 (I ss. 45-62).
[76] Bacon, *Novum Organum*, p.35.

like the castles and strongholds of the Idols, and … work so as virtually to enslave and surrender the world to human thought, and human thought to words.[77]

Fortunately, however, Bacon believed that the false theories imposed by philosophers could be 'rooted out' of the mind, if only 'with difficulty'[78]. The means of doing so, he thought, was the observational practice of judiciously collecting facts and experiments into natural histories, and then arguing on the basis of these histories. More precisely, Bacon believed that the rigours of following this method served to undercut the epistemic authority accorded to the beliefs of individual philosophers,[79] and to make the discovery of truth 'a child of time [rather] than of talent'[80]. This being the case, Bacon believed that his new 'experimental science' would eventually liberate mankind's knowledge of the natural world from the false theories of ingenious philosophers, whose epistemic credentials were derived from forcefully held convictions, not from their truth.

So as to better overthrow the authority of false philosophers, Bacon divided them into three different 'sects', which he regarded as endemic to philosophy as such, whether ancient or modern. The first were '*Sophistical*' philosophers, who 'wrench things various and commonplace from experience, things neither securely established nor carefully examined and weighed, and leave the rest to meditation and intellectual agitation'[81]. The second were the 'Empirical family of

[77] Bacon, *Novum Organum*, p.109 (I s. 69).
[78] Bacon, *Novum Organum*, p.35.
[79] Bacon, *Novum Organum*, p.185 (I s.122).
[80] Bacon, *Novum Organum*, p.185 (I s.122).
[81] Bacon, *Novum Organum*, p.99 (I s. 62).

philosophers', or those 'who have worked hard and meticulously on a few experiments and thence have had the nerve to extract and fabricate philosophies, and wondrously twist everything else to fit them'[82]. While the third, and most damaging to science, was the 'Superstitious' sect of philosophers, who 'intermingle theology and tradition' with natural philosophy, and in doing so produce 'not only fantastical philosophy, but heretical religion'[83]. Against these three different sects of false philosophers Bacon styled himself as the 'Alexander' of the sciences,[84] whose 'ambition' ('if that is what we must call it'[85]) was to enable 'the contemplation of things as they are, without superstition or imposture, error or confusion'[86].

Given Bacon's striking use of the rhetoric of conquest and combat, it is tempting to think that when Hume characterises his own science of human nature as a march upon occupied territory, that he is self-consciously speaking in a Baconian register. Indeed, it is worth observing that similarly Baconian allusions can be found in Shaftesbury and Hobbes, who despite their many differences, both believed that moral philosophy was 'immured' in 'colleges and cells', and was made to work 'servilely' at the hands of 'empirics and pedantic sophists', while they pictured themselves as liberators.[87] I will say more on this next section, yet, as things stand, it is at least plausible to think that Hume was positioning himself as a moral philosopher with the same intellectual ambitions as Bacon himself,

[82] Bacon, *Novum Organum*, p.99 (I s. 62).
[83] Bacon, *Novum Organum*, p.99 (I s. 62); p.103 (I s. 65).
[84] Bacon, *Novum Organum*, p.139 (I s. 87).
[85] Bacon, *Novum Organum*, p.195 (I s. 129).
[86] Bacon, *Novum Organum*, p.195 (I s. 129).
[87] See Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, (ed. Lawrence E. Klein), Cambridge University Press, 1999, p.232; and see Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan.* Ed. Edwin Curley. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994, pp. 453-468.

and that his aim was not simply to confute the false theories of speculative moralists, but to methodically root out the prejudices endemic to moral philosophical reasoning as such.

In fact there is even evidence to suggest that Hume regarded a Baconian antipathy towards philosophical prejudices to be a defining characteristic of experimental moral philosophy. Such evidence appears in the *Abstract* to the *Treatise* – which Hume wrote and anonymously published in the period between the publication of Books One and Two of the *Treatise* in 1739 and the publication of Book Three in 1740. The *Abstract* is a useful point of reference for understanding Hume's conception of experimental moral philosophy because he begins it by recasting a number of claims that he had made in the *Introduction* to the *Treatise*, only this time in more detail. [88]

He writes:

> THIS book [i.e. the *Treatise*] seems to be wrote upon the same plan with several other works that have had a great vogue of late years in *England*. The philosophical spirit, which has been so much improved all over *Europe* within these last fourscore years, has been carried to as great a length in this kingdom as in any other. Our writers seem even to have started a new kind of philosophy, which promises more both to the entertainment and advantage of mankind, than any other with which the world has been yet acquainted. Most of the philosophers of antiquity, who treated of human

[88] For a nice discussion of the shifts between the *Introduction* and the *Abstract* see Eric Schliesser. The science of man and the invention of usable traditions, in Tamás Demeter, Kathryn Murphy and Claus Zittel (Eds.) *Conflicting values of inquiry: Ideologies of epistemology in early modern Europe.* Brill, 2014, pp. 306-336.

> nature, have shewn more of a delicacy of sentiment, a just sense of morals, or a greatness of soul, than a depth of reasoning and reflection. They content themselves with representing the common sense of mankind in the strongest lights, and with the best turn of thought and expression, without following out steadily a chain of propositions, or forming the several truths into a regular science. But 'tis at least worth while to try if the science of *man* will not admit of the same accuracy which several parts of natural philosophy are found susceptible of. There seems to be all the reason in the world to imagine that it may be carried to the greatest degree of exactness. If, in examining several phaenomena, we find that they resolve themselves into one common principle, and can trace this principle into another, we shall at last arrive at those few simple principles, on which all the rest depend. And tho' we can never arrive at the ultimate principles, 'tis a satisfaction to go as far as our faculties will allow us.
>
> (T *Abstract*; SBN 645-6)

A number of things stand out in this passage. The first is that Hume locates the 'new kind of philosophy' begun by English language moralists within a broader improvement in the European philosophical spirit over the past eighty years. This improvement, it would seem, pertains to the 'degree of exactness' that had been attained in natural philosophy thanks to the 'accuracy' with which natural phenomena had begun to be studied. The second is that Hume believes the 'plan' of English language moralists had been to apply the same spirit of accuracy to the study of human nature. For while the moralists of antiquity had shown a 'delicacy of sentiment' and a 'just sense of morals', they had never attempted to make a 'regular science' out of moral philosophy – in which one attempts to

subsume several different phenomena under a common principle, and to reduce all one's principles to a few simple basic principles.

What we find, then, is that Hume regarded English language philosophers as having started out upon a 'plan' to improve the science of man, and to do so by employing the accurate methods of modern natural science, as opposed to the inaccurate methods of ancient moral philosophers. It is notable here that when Hume describes 'the philosophers of antiquity' he casts them as Bacon's 'Sophistical' sect of false philosophers: those who 'wrench things various and commonplace from experience, things neither securely established nor carefully examined and weighed, and leave the rest to meditation and intellectual agitation'. For the chief concern of the ancients, according to Hume, was to represent 'the common sense of mankind … with the best turn of thought and expression', rather than to examine whether our 'common sense' notions about ourselves are accurate. So far as this is what Hume means to suggest, then we can say that English language moralists had rejected the sophistries of ancient philosophers, and had set out to produce an 'exact' understanding of human nature.

Hume confirms this reading in the next paragraph of the *Abstract*. For he goes on to remark that the author of the *Treatise*, i.e. himself, philosophises upon the same plan as other English moralists. That he:

> proposes to anatomize human nature in a regular manner, and promises to draw no conclusions but where he is authorized by experience. He talks with contempt of

> hypotheses; and insinuates, that such of our countrymen as have banished them from moral philosophy, have done a more signal service to the world, than *my Lord Bacon*, whom he considers as the father of experimental physicks. He mentions, on this occasion, *Mr. Locke*, *my Lord Shaftesbury*, *Dr. Mandeville*, *Mr. Hutcheson*, *Dr. Butler*, who, tho' they differ in many points among themselves, seem all to agree in founding their accurate disquisitions of human nature entirely upon experience.
>
> (T *Abstract*; SBN 646)

This passage confirms that Hume draws a distinction between the 'regular' or 'exact' science of human nature being pursued by his contemporaries, and the hypothetical moral philosophy of the Ancients. Yet, furthermore, when we read this passage alongside that which precedes it, we are able to draw a further distinction between one's producing a 'regular' anatomy of human nature, and one's anatomising human nature on the authority of experience. To propose a 'regular' anatomy of human nature is to propose a *positive* science of man in the reductionist manner of the modern natural sciences: a science that is ultimately a system of causal hypotheses.[89] By contrast, to promise to anatomise human nature on the authority of experience is to commit oneself to the *negative* project of banishing 'hypotheses' from the science of man, in the broadly Baconian sense of speculative propositions that are maintained dogmatically at the expense of

[89] There is much that could be said (and that has been said) about the nature of what I have here called Hume's positive project in experimental moral philosophy, and in particular regarding Hume's 'Newtonianism' (for a helpful overview, see Yoram Hazony and Eric Schliesser, 'Newton and Hume' in Paul Russell (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Hume*, Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 673-707). As my focus is on what I am calling Hume's negative project in experimental moral philosophy I do not wish to enter such discussions other than to say that I have found Tamás Demeter, *David Hume and the Culture of Scottish Newtonianism Methodology and Ideology in Enlightenment Inquiry*, Brill, 2016, especially illuminating here.

experience. Crucially, Hume believes that both a 'regular manner' of reasoning and a 'contempt of hypotheses' are essential components of the experimental philosophy that English language moralists had inherited from Bacon.

None of which is to say – Hume makes clear – that experimental moralists were in agreement as to what experience revealed about human nature, or even what observational procedures to use. Nor is it to say that they all dismissed the moral *wisdom* of the ancients, whom Hume describes as having a 'just' sense for moral good and evil. Rather, Hume's point is that experimental moral philosophers defer *only* to experience and observation when it comes to determining what ought to be believed in the science of man. The concomitant epistemic attitude of this *respect* for experience and observation is *contempt* for hypotheses that are maintained at the expense of experience, no matter their pedigree.

3. English Experimentalism and Hobbesian Empiricism

So far I have argued that Hume conceived of experimental moral philosophy on the model of Bacon's conquest to liberate natural philosophy from the prejudices of dogmatic philosophers. More precisely, I have argued that Hume identified *experimental* moral philosophy by its broadly Baconian 'contempt' for conceptions of human nature that drew their epistemic authority from force of conviction, rather than from experience and observation. On this picture of moral experimentalism, to attempt a regular anatomy of human nature on the basis of experience and observation is also to liberate the science of man from false philosophical authorities. For if one defers *only* to experience and

observation when drawing one's conclusions – or so the thought goes – then one will eventually arrive at an understanding of mankind that is free from dogmatic prejudices.

However, if this is correct, then a general question arises as to the influence of Thomas Hobbes upon Hume's conception of moral experimentalism. For, Hobbes, who was once Bacon's amanuensis, had also followed Bacon in bemoaning 'the suppression of true philosophy' by the 'authority of Aristotle' and the 'doctors of the Roman Church'[90]. Against such 'vain philosophy and fabulous traditions', Hobbes set out to replace the 'authority of books' and 'supernatural revelation' with the cautious study of things as we find them to be, or more precisely, with '*reasoning from the manner of generation of anything to the properties, or from the properties to the manner of generation of the same*'. [91] The chief object of Hobbes' overtly Baconian programme in philosophy was human nature, both in itself and in society. As such, if a Baconian contempt for false moral philosophical authorities was what Hume took to be the mark of an experimental moralist, then Hobbes is a prime candidate for an experimental moral philosopher.

This being the case, however, it is notable that Hobbes' name is absent from Hume's list of English philosophers who had sought to banish speculative hypotheses from moral philosophy, and had attempted to found the science of man upon the sole authority of experience and observation. The absence of

[90] See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 453-468; esp. pp. 467-8.
[91] See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 453-468; esp. pp. 453-4.

Hobbes from Hume's list has puzzled many commentators, especially those who suppose Hobbes to have been a significant influence upon Hume's thinking,[92] and the issue is no less pressing on the present interpretation. So what then did Hume make of Hobbes' attempt to liberate philosophical anthropology from false philosophy?

We can make a start on this question if we consider the manner in which Hobbes had been criticised by those philosophers whom Hume does include on his list. And a good place to begin here is with Shaftesbury's critique of Hobbes in his *Sensus Communis*. There Shaftesbury had claimed that the reason why recent philosophers, including Hobbes, had proposed such a 'paradoxical system' as to deny the 'reality of virtue' and the 'natural goodness' of mankind was chiefly 'to oppose some other systems, which by their fair appearance have helped, they think, to bring mankind under subjection'[93]. Here Shaftesbury is referring to both Hobbes and Locke, yet he also says that one such 'able and witty philosopher of our nation was … so possessed with a horror of this kind' that he 'acted in [a] spirit of massacre' against all ancient philosophers and religious authorities.[94]

[92] See here Duncan Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics*, Cambridge University Press, 1975, pp. 8-9; and see also Paul Russell, *The Riddle of Hume's Treatise: Skepticism, Naturalism, and Irreligion*, Oxford University Press, 2008, p.67. In addressing this issue, Russell writes: 'I believe that the most plausible reason Hume avoided any explicit acknowledgment of Hobbesian influence is that while he no doubt sought "literary fame," he had no desire for "controversy, notoriety, nor martyrdom." Any acknowledged link between the *Treatise* and Hobbes's philosophy would certainly have spelled serious trouble for Hume. Quentin Skinner has shown that although there were many writers in the seventeenth century "who might have felt Hobbes worthy of citation as an authority," they generally refrained from citing him because they had to take into consideration "Hobbes's dangerous reputation." … Clearly, then, it was not unusual for philosophers at this time to refrain from acknowledging Hobbes as a source for their own philosophy' (Russell, 2008, pp. 66-7). I do not doubt that it would have been troublesome for Hume to acknowledge Hobbes as an influence upon his *Treatise* philosophy. This said, I will argue that the most plausible reason that Hume leaves Hobbes off his list of experimental moral philosophers is because Hobbes was not, nor was perceived to be, an experimental philosopher.

[93] Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, p.45.

[94] Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, pp. 40-42.

Here Shaftesbury is referring to Hobbes in particular, whose love of 'great truths and sovereign maxims … made him the most laborious of all men in composing systems of this kind'[95].

Shaftesbury's critique of Hobbes is instructive because Shaftesbury's contempt of hypotheses is palpable: Shaftesbury presents Hobbes as being under the sway of 'sovereign maxims', and he refers to Hobbes' *Leviathan* dismissively as his 'Leviathan hypothesis'[96]. Not only this, but Shaftesbury casts Hobbes as a 'Gothic' philosopher, whose 'barbarian zeal' to free humanity from the 'subjection' of dogmas had led him 'to propose the razing of all monuments and memorials' to 'philosophy or morals or any other science or part of learning'[97]. This last point is particularly suggestive, because it implies that Shaftesbury conceived of Hobbes' philosophy as a Baconian conquest to wrest control of the science of human nature away from false epistemic authorities – something to which Shaftesbury himself was sympathetic.[98] At the same time, however, it reveals that Shaftesbury regarded Hobbes as exceeding what was necessary to capture moral philosophy from ancient dogmas and religious superstitions, and thus falling into a 'general scepticism'[99].

Shaftesbury's critique of Hobbes' supposed devotion to 'sovereign maxims' was not an isolated criticism, but was echoed in later attacks on Hobbes' philosophy

[95] Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, p.42.
[96] Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, p.42 fn. 11.
[97] Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, p.40
[98] For all their differences, both Hobbes and Shaftesbury regarded 'the Universities' as centres of sophism, and were staunchly opposed to 'priestcraft'. See, for instance, *Characteristics*, pp. 231-6; 351-65 and Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 453-68.
[99] Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, p.45

by other avowedly 'experimental' moral philosophers. Francis Hutcheson, for instance, often accused Hobbes of being willing to 'twist' facts about human nature to accord with his 'selfish' theory of moral motivation, and he lamented the effect that such distorted representations of human nature had had upon subsequent moral philosophy.[100] Yet the most insightful of all attacks on Hobbes is found in a footnote to Butler's first sermon *Upon Human Nature*, which is worth quoting at some length, given its pertinence to the present discussion. Butler writes:

> Suppose a man of learning to be writing a grave book upon *human nature*, and to shew in several parts of it that he had an insight into the subject he was considering; amongst other things, the following one would require to be accounted for; the appearance of benevolence or good-will in men towards each other in the instances of natural relation and in others (Hobbes, *Of Human Nature* c. ix, § 17). Cautious of being deceived with outward show, he retires within himself to see exactly, what that is in the mind of man from whence this appearance proceeds; and, upon deep reflection, asserts the principle in the mind to be only the love of power, and delight in the exercise of it. … [C]ould any one be thoroughly satisfied, that what is commonly called benevolence or good-will was really the affection meant, but only by being made to understand that this learned person had a general hypothesis, to which the appearance of good-will could no otherwise be reconciled?
>
> …If any person can in earnest doubt, whether there be such a thing as good-will in one man towards another… let it be observed, that whether man be thus, or otherwise

[100] See, for example, Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises.* Edited by Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004), pp. 93-94 and Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense.* Edited by Aaron Garrett. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2002, pp. 4-6.

> constituted, what is the inward frame in this particular, it is a mere question of fact or natural history, not provable immediately by reason. It is therefore to be judged of and determined in the same way other facts or matters of natural history are: by appealing to the external senses, or inward perceptions, respectively, as the matter under consideration is cognizable by one or the other: by arguing from acknowledged facts and actions … and lastly, by the testimony of mankind.[101]

One reason why Butler's critique of Hobbes is worth quoting at such length is because Butler provides an exceptionally clear statement of what he takes the experimental method in moral philosophy to be. Here Butler delineates three different ways that one might prove any 'fact or matter of natural history', *viz*. by appeal to sensory perceptions (external or internal), by arguing from observations, and by the general testimony of mankind. Butler contrasts these experimental procedures with Hobbes' method of 'deep reflection', in which one attempts to reconcile 'appearances' with a 'general hypothesis'. It is Butler's contention that Hobbes' speculative reduction of benevolence to ambition can be shown to be false by any one of his three experimental methods of proof, because each of them patently reveal 'that there is some degree of benevolence amongst men'.

Yet the reason why Butler's criticism of Hobbes is more insightful than other similar criticisms is that Butler makes it clear that Hobbes' speculative anthropology *begins* with a cautious study of experience and observation. Butler describes Hobbes as writing a 'grave book' on human nature, in which 'several

[101] Joseph Butler, *Fifteen Sermons Preached at The Rolls Chapel*. Edited by T.A. Roberts (Society for the Production of Christian Knowledge, 1970), p. 19.

parts' show that he has had 'insight' into the subject. Problems arise, however, when he is required to account for certain 'appearances' that do not obviously fit the theory he has developed. According to Butler, Hobbes' approach is to reconcile such appearances to his 'general hypothesis' on the authority of his own 'deep reflection', and to do so at the expense of experience, observation, and the general testimony of mankind.

What Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Butler's criticisms of Hobbes reveal, I suggest, is that those philosophers whom Hume lists as his fellow experimentalists generally regarded Hobbes as a false philosopher of what Bacon had labelled 'the Empiricist family of philosophers': i.e. those philosophers 'who have worked hard and meticulously on a few experiments and thence have had the nerve to extract and fabricate philosophies, and wondrously twist everything else to fit them'. Regarding such false philosophers, Bacon had warned his readers that:

> I already foresee and prophesy that when men, spurred on by my advice, seriously apply themselves to experience (and say farewell to sophistical doctrines), then because of the premature and precipitate onrush of the intellect and its tendency to jump the gun and fly off towards the generalities and principles of things, terrible danger may well arise from philosophies of this kind, a danger which we ought to face up to now.[102]

Given this background, it seems reasonable to believe that self-consciously 'experimental' moral philosophers were alert to the possibility of 'Empiricists'

[102] Bacon, *Novum Organum*, p.101 (I s. 64).

amongst their ranks. Not only this, but it seems clear that Hobbes was believed to be just such a philosopher. For Hobbes had explicitly rejected the 'vain philosophy' of the ancients, and had based his doctrines on experience. Yet Hobbes was regularly depicted as being prepared to 'twist' facts to fit a general hypothesis, rather than defer to the authority of experience and observation.

Indeed, even Mandeville had criticized Hobbes' denial of man's natural sociability as 'unworthy of a philosopher'[103]. Crucially, however, this was not because Mandeville agreed with Shaftesbury and other such 'flatterers of our species'[104] that mankind was naturally fit for society – quite the opposite. Instead Mandeville dismissed Hobbes' observations on infant selfishness as insufficient to establish that mankind was naturally unfit for society; for, according to Mandeville, one also had to show that the patently observable sociable affections of adults were acquired, rather than innate, before one could justify the claim that mankind was naturally selfish.[105]

All in all, then, it would seem that Hume had excellent reasons to leave Hobbes off his list of English language philosophers who had begun to put the science of man on the 'new footing' of 'experience and observation'. For while Hobbes did begin with experience and observation when developing his philosophical theories, experience and observation were not perceived to be the epistemic foundation of his science of human nature. Instead most of the philosophers whom Hume does list as his fellow experimentalists believed that the epistemic

[103] Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Publick Benefits,* (2 vols.) (ed. F.B. Kaye) Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, 1988). Vol 2. p. 177.
[104] Mandeville, *Fable Vol 2*, p. 301.
[105] Mandeville, *Fable Vol 2*, p. 184.

authority for Hobbes' anthropology were 'sovereign maxims' that he was willing to twist his observations to fit; and they regarded their experimental observations on human nature as methodological correctives to Hobbes' 'Empiricist' anthropology.

None of this is to say, however, that Hume himself had no regard for Hobbes' insights into human nature, nor any sympathy for his 'selfish' hypothesis. Indeed the truth of the selfish theory of moral motivation was one of the major points at issue amongst experimentalist moralists themselves, and Hume certainly leans more in its favour than others. Rather, it is only to suggest that Hume – like most other experimentalists – believed that Hobbes was guilty of 'that error, into which so many have fallen, of imposing their conjectures and hypotheses on the world for the most certain principles'. Against this, Hume's commitment to the experimental method of reasoning demanded that he throw off any prejudices he may have had towards Hobbes' Empiricist anthropology, and that he subject Hobbes' conjectures to the authority of experience and observation.[106]

[106] Nor do I mean to suggest here that Hume thought Hobbes' 'selfish hypothesis' was the only instance of Hobbes illicitly according epistemic 'sovereignty' to 'hypotheses and conjectures' at the expense of experience and observation. Indeed it is arguable, I believe, that Hume viewed Hobbes as having justified his claim that 'the Original' of all our thoughts 'is that which we call SENSE' by no more than a cursory appeal to the well-known maxim 'that there is no conception in a man's mind which hath not at first, totally, or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of Sense' (see here Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 6). Against this, Hume's self-consciously laboured attempt to establish that 'all our simple ideas proceed either mediately or immediately, from their correspondent impressions' (T 1.1.1.11, SBN 6-7), complete with a discussion of a notable 'exception' to this 'general maxim' (T 1.1.1.10, SBN 6), is an attempt to provide an experimental basis for the priority of sense to thought, by grounding it in experience and observation.

4. An Alexander of the Mind

Having come to see how Hobbes' Baconian programme in moral philosophy was regarded by those who Hume considered his fellow moral experimentalists; and having conjectured that Hume too rejected Hobbes' *Empiricism*; we are now in a position to nuance the claim that Hume conceived of experimental moral philosophy as a broadly Baconian attempt to purge prejudiced conceptions of human nature from the moral sciences. In particular, it seems reasonable to think that Hume envisioned experimental moral philosophy as an attempt to move Hobbes' Baconian programme in moral philosophy beyond Hobbes' own Empiricist prejudices, in the name of a truly impartial science of man.

On this reading of the development of experimental moral philosophy it was Hobbes who first decisively pierced the epistemic authority of ancient philosophers and superstitious clergy in the moral sciences. Yet, having done so, Hobbes had then "jumped the gun" and had presented an *Empirical* account of human nature that reflected his own suspicious attitudes towards mankind, more than it reflected what human beings are actually observed to be like. Against Hobbes' Empiricist moral philosophy, *experimental* moral philosophers sought to give an account of human nature which, like Hobbes' own, was free from ancient sophistries and independent of supernatural revelation, yet which, unlike Hobbes', was grounded *solely* upon the epistemic authority of experience and observation.

Yet, if this is an accurate account of Hume's conception of experimental moral philosophy, then a number of questions arise regarding Hume's conception of himself as an experimental moral philosopher. We might ask, for instance, whether this conception of moral experimentalism was prominent in Hume's thinking while he was composing the *Treatise*, or whether it was a post-hoc development? For there are many recognisable influences upon the character of Hume's thought, not least the influence of sceptical thinkers: both ancient and modern, religious and secular.[107] As such, we might wonder whether Hume considered the liberation of moral knowledge to be his fundamental aim in the *Treatise*, or whether this characterisation of his philosophy was merely an attempt to align his otherwise 'very sceptical' (T *Abstract* 27; SBN 657) philosophy with the work of those philosophers who had most recently gained the attention of the English reading public.

So far as answering this question goes, we are fortunate to possess a letter that Hume wrote to a physician at the beginning of 1734, only a few months before travelling to France to work on the *Treatise*. In the letter Hume gives what he calls 'a kind of history of my life' in which he describes himself as having spent his mid-to-late teens reading 'Books of Reasoning and Philosophy … Poetry & the polite Authors' until a dissatisfaction with the 'endless disputes' he found gave rise to what he calls 'a certain Boldness of Temper … which was not enclin'd to submit to any authority in these Subjects, but lead me to seek out some new

[107] For details here see James Harris and Mikko Tolonen, 'Hume in and out of Scottish Context' in Aaron Garrett and James Harris (eds.), *Scottish Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century, Volume I: Morals, Politics, Art, Religion*, Oxford University Press, 2015, pp.163-194. Also, Dario Perinetti, *Hume at La Flèche: Skepticism and the French Connection*, Journal of the History of Philosophy, Volume 56, Number 1, January 2018, pp. 45-74.

Medium, by which Truth might be establisht'[108]. This yearning for intellectual independence was soon followed by his discovery of a 'new Scene of Thought', to which he applied himself 'entirely'; although not for long, since he soon developed a 'Distemper' which ground his studies to a halt, and despite brief periods of respite, had persisted, and was the reason for his seeking epistolary advice from a physician.[109]

For present purposes, what is interesting about Hume's account of his teenage nervous breakdown is that he attributes the cause of his 'Distemper' to his 'being smit' with the 'beautiful Representations of Virtue & Philosophy' that he found in 'Books of Morality such as Cicero, Seneca & Plutarch'[110]. This is interesting because it suggests that the young Hume's rejection of intellectual authorities and embrace of a new scene of thought had not been as entire as he makes out, and that he came to consider the persistence of ancient ideals in his philosophical self-conception as the cause of his nervous breakdown. Indeed, Hume goes on to say that upon briefly recovering, and returning to philosophical reflection, he:

> found that the Moral Philosophy transmitted to us by Antiquity, labor'd under the same Inconvenience that has been found in their natural Philosophy, of being entirely Hypothetical, & depending more upon Invention than Experience. Every one consulted his Fancy in erecting Schemes of Virtue & of Happiness, without regarding human Nature, upon which every moral Conclusion must depend. This therefore I

[108] David Hume. *Letters of David Hume (Vol. 1)*, (ed J. Y. T. Greig), Oxford University Press, 1969. p. 13.
[109] Hume, *Letter*, p.13
[110] Hume, *Letter*, p.14

> resolved to make my principal Study, & the Source from which I wou'd derive every Truth in Criticism as well as Morality. I believe 'tis a certain Fact that most of the Philosophers who have gone before us, have been overthrown by the Greatness of their Genius, & that little more is requir'd to make a man succeed in this Study than to throw off all Prejudices either for his own Opinions or for this of others. At least this is all I have to depend on for the Truth of my reasonings.[111]

What we find, then, is that at some point after his breakdown Hume had come to believe that the overthrow of philosophical prejudices, both one's own and those of others, was the key to discovering truth in philosophy. And that when it came to moral philosophy – which is to say, the science of human nature – this meant the overthrow of the fictitious philosophical self-conceptions that had been transmitted to the present from antiquity. For such self-conceptions were the products of the 'Invention' of the Ancient's, not experience, and had accrued the assent of 'most of the Philosophers who have gone before us' thanks to the 'Greatness of their Genius' (i.e. the genius of the Ancients'), rather than their regard to what human nature is like. To this extent, Hume thought, moral philosophy suffered from the same problem that Bacon had diagnosed in natural philosophy, namely that it was 'entirely Hypothetical'; this being the case, it is little surprise that the remedy the young Hume recommends is exactly the same as that which Bacon had recommended – the surrender of all intellectual prejudices to the authority of experience.

[111] Hume, *Letter*, p.16

It would seem, then, that Hume had hit upon the notion that the science of man was plagued by false conceptions of human nature some time before he arrived in France to compose the *Treatise*. Whether this belief resulted from an engagement with other experimental moralists (the 'new scene of thought' perhaps?), from Bacon himself – or even from Hobbes – is difficult to say. Yet, whatever the case, it would appear that Hume's later decision to characterise his *Treatise* as a conquest to liberate the science of man was not a post-hoc rationalisation of his approach to moral philosophy, nor simply a nod to philosophical fashion, but a genuine and deeply held commitment.

Indeed, it would seem that Hume had long aspired to be an 'Alexander' of the mind, in the same way that Bacon had cast himself as an 'Alexander' of natural philosophy: with a mission to free moral philosophy from epistemic slavery by developing an unprejudiced account of human nature on the basis of observation and experience. Having come to see this, however, we can ask a final question: namely, how? Or more precisely, how does Hume's particular 'attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects' set him apart from his fellow moral experimentalists, who were also committed to the development of an impartial account of human nature, based solely upon experience.

To answer this question it will be useful to first distinguish between Hume's fundamental scientific ambition for the *Treatise*, and the sense of intellectual conquest that gives this ambition its shape. Hume's fundamental scientific ambition for the *Treatise*, I suggest, was to produce a complete system of the

sciences that was probably true, and that established the limits of what it is possible for human beings to know about the natural and moral worlds.[112] Hume's sense of intellectual conquest, on the other hand, directs this ambition towards the overthrow of speculative dogmas as a source of epistemic authority. This, I have argued, is a Baconian project to be an 'Alexander' of the moral sciences, who enables 'the contemplation of things as they are, without superstition or imposture, error or confusion'.

Both these closely related goals are served, I contend, by Hume's 'enlarging the sphere of [his] experiments as much as possible' (T 1.3.15.12; SBN 175) and explaining the reason and passions of *animals* using the same hypotheses that he had used to explain the reason and passions of human beings (see T 1.3.16; SBN 176-9, T 2.1.12; 324-8 and T 2.2.12; 397-8). For, Hume tells us, whenever any 'mental operation' is believed to be 'common to men and beast', we find that applying one's 'hypothesis' regarding its causes to both humans and animals serves as a 'decisive trial' as to whether one's theory is true (T 1.3.16.4; SBN 177). This is because it is only if one's hypotheses apply to both humans and animals that one can be sure one has removed all superfluous circumstances regarding the production of such operations in humans, and has accounted only for what is necessary (see T 1.3.14.11-2; SBN 175-6). In this way, Hume thinks, the 'doctrine' that the causes of animal behaviour are the same as the causes of human behaviour 'furnishes us with a kind of touchstone, by which we may try

[112] This has been called Hume's 'foundational project'. See here Miren Boehm, 'Hume's Foundational Project in the *Treatise*', *European Journal of Philosophy* 24(1) (2016), pp. 55-77, and Don Garrett, 'Hume's System of the Sciences', in Angela Coventry and Alexander Sager (Eds.), *The Humean Mind*, Routledge: Oxford, 2019, pp. 55-71.

every system in this species of philosophy [i.e. moral philosophy]' (T 1.3.16.3; SBN 176), including other experimental theories of human nature.

At the same time, however, to rest one's convictions as to the truth of one's theories upon their being 'equally applicable to beasts as to the human species' (T 1.3.16.8; SBN 178) is to effectively displace speculation as a source of epistemic authority, including one's own speculations, and to replace it with experience, in its broadest possible sense. Towards this point, it is notable that Hume's attempts to show that the causes of animal beliefs and passions are the same as those of human beliefs and passions rest on his showing that these 'mental operations' are produced by (among other things) the association of ideas (see T 1.3.16; SBN 176-9, T 2.1.12; 324-8 and T 2.2.12; 397-8). For Hume says in the *Abstract* that if anything can entitle him to 'so glorious a name as an *inventor*' it is the 'use he makes of the principle of the association of ideas, which enters into most of his philosophy' (T *Abstract* 35; SBN 661-2). This said, however, it is not the ingenuity of his use of this principle that Hume thinks gives his hypotheses their epistemic authority, but the equal applicability of his use of this principle to both humans and animals.

My contention, then, is that Hume's 'doctrine' of ensuring that his hypotheses extend to animals is the distinguishing characteristic of his moral experimentalism. Hume himself tells us that he got the idea from anatomists, for whom, he says, ''tis usual … to join their observations and experiments on human bodies to those on beasts, and from the agreement of these experiments to derive an additional argument for any particular hypothesis' (T 2.1.12.2; SBN

325). Another possibility, however, is that Hume got the idea from Mandeville, who had made a point of demonstrating that various human 'excellencies' vis-à-vis animals – including 'reason' and 'speech' – arise in human nature by 'a Concurrence of several Things, and not in any one palpable Quality, that Man is endued with, and Brutes are destitute of'[113]. Yet Mandeville's aim here was to expose 'exalted' notions of human nature as mere 'flatteries', not to safeguard the study of human nature from intellectual prejudices (his own included). In this Hume was alone: thus it seems safe to say that this practice is what sets Hume's experimental science of man apart from those who also sought to put the science of man upon the 'new footing' of experience and observation. Indeed, it is arguable that only with this move does the possibility of a truly impartial science of man become a reality.

5. Conclusion

My aim in the above has been to develop a reading of Hume's experimental moral philosophy that is capable of sustaining my claim that Book Two is unified by a destructive agenda. To this end I have interrogated Hume's description of his experimental science of man as a conquest to liberate moral knowledge from its present state of captivity. Central to this conception of his philosophy, I claim, is Hume's belief that the experimental method of reasoning, in both natural and moral philosophy, is characterised by contempt for philosophical theories that have acquired their epistemic authority from force of conviction, rather than deference to experience and observation. Toward this point I have argued that

[113] See Mandeville, *Fable Vol 2*, p. 188.

Hume quite plausibly modelled his conception of moral experimentalism upon Bacon's attempt to liberate knowledge of the natural world from its enslavement to various 'sects' of false philosophers. In this, I suggest, Hume was like Hobbes. Yet, similar to other experimental philosophers, Hume rejected Hobbes' Empiricism, and sought to develop a truly impartial account of human nature, based on the authority of experience and observation alone. This said, Hume was unlike other experimentalists insofar as he sought to secure the impartiality of his philosophical anthropology by ensuring that his hypotheses applied equally to animals. This, I contend, is the distinguishing characteristic of Hume's moral experimentalism.

By way of conclusion, I would like to guard against two possible misunderstandings of Hume's moral experimentalism, as I have presented it here. First, I do not mean to suggest that the sophistries of ancient philosophers and the 'sovereign maxims' of Empiricists were the only, or even the main targets of experimental moral philosophers, Hume included. Rather, the targets of experimental moral philosophers were any beliefs whose epistemic authority was derived from a conviction of their truth. Such beliefs included those that *began* with experience, yet were *believed* on the authority of conviction, whether one's own or others: this was the case with sophistical beliefs, both ancient and modern, and with the overgeneralisations of Empiricists. Yet such beliefs also included those that were affirmed on the authority of conviction, without any regard to experience and observation: this was the case with superstitious

beliefs, which were thought to arise from 'poetical delusions'[114], and with those 'speculative' beliefs derived from a supposedly "pure" intellectual faculty.[115]

Secondly, I do not mean to suggest that Hume, or those philosophers whom he lists as his fellow experimentalists, were not themselves committed to any 'hypotheses' in moral philosophy. Indeed, as the example of Hobbes goes to show, the danger of becoming an Empiricist was ever-present for those philosophers who had rejected the authority of sophistical beliefs in favour of experimental procedures. Not only this, but as the young Hume's mental breakdown revealed to him, even a self-conscious rejection of intellectual authorities may not be entire, and the influence of ancient inventions may persist unwittingly into one's experimental philosophy. The same point holds regarding superstitious hypotheses. For insofar as experimental philosophers were concerned, the difference between a superstitious and a genuine religious belief was determined by the truth of one's experiential grounds for holding the belief.[116] This being the case, to mistakenly believe that a religious belief was experientially well grounded was to effectively – although not intentionally – philosophise on the authority of superstition, rather than experience.

Another way to put these points is to say that one can sincerely hold the epistemic attitude of contempt for hypotheses while unwittingly accepting them.

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[114] See John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding.* Edited by Peter H. Nidditch. Oxford University Press, 1975 pp. 697-706; Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, pp. 4-28, and also Bacon, *Novum Organum*, pp. 101-103 (I s. 65).

[115] See, as an example, Joseph Butler, *The analogy of religion, natural and revealed, to the constitution and course of nature. To which are added two brief dissertations: I. Of Personal Identity. II. Of the Nature of Virtue*. London, 1736, p. v.

[116] See Locke, *Essay*, pp. 697-706 (IV.19) and Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, pp.4-28.

In fact, a useful way to conceive of experimental moral philosophers, considered on the whole, is as an intellectual avant-garde, dedicated to the improvement of the science of man through the overthrow of philosophical convictions, both their own and those of others, out of epistemic deference to experience and observation. On this conception of experimental moral philosophy, as it was only just beginning to be practiced, the discovery of truth becomes the child of time, rather than of genius. And while this is not to say that Hume, or other experimentalists, did not aspire to be philosophical geniuses, or to acquire 'so glorious a name as that of *inventor*' (T *Abstract*; SBN 661); it is to say that experimental philosophers were characterised by their deference to the epistemic authority of experience and observation when it came to determining the truth of such ingenious inventions, their own included.

Having arrived at this conception of Hume's experimentalism, however, it is worth remarking upon a difference between Bacon's epistemic deference to experience and Hume's. In particular, it is notable that Bacon's experimental natural philosophy was explicitly embedded in a theological anthropology, and that it is impossible to separate Bacon's epistemic deference to experimental procedures from his pious belief in mankind's lapsarian corruption.[117] In Hume's writings, by contrast, the justification of experimental procedures has a decidedly mundane origin. For Hume tells us that his epistemic humility was borne of a 'promise' – presumably to other experimental philosophers – to defer only to experience and observation when determining what to believe (T

[117] See, for instance, Bacon, *Novum Organum*, pp. 195-197 (I s. 129) see also Peter Harrison, *The Fall of Man and Foundations of Science*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, for an extended defence of the thesis that the doctrine of the fall is central to the development of the experimental method in natural philosophy up until Newton.

Abstract; SBN 646). This was, it would seem, an allegiance that Hume willingly imposed upon himself. More precisely, it was an epistemic obligation that he accepted in the name of securing a true science of man against the distorting and destabilising forces of dogmatism: a science that he believed would better serve to the entertainment and advantage of the human species than any that had come before it.

2. Pride and Prejudice: Mandeville without the Moralising

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued that Hume's conception of experimental moral philosophy was based upon Francis Bacon's attempt to liberate knowledge of the natural world from its enslavement to various 'sects' of false philosophers – the *Sophistic*, the *Superstitious*, and the *Empirical*. More precisely, I argued that Hume envisioned experimental moral philosophy as an attempt to move Thomas Hobbes' Baconian programme in moral philosophy beyond Hobbes' own Empiricist prejudices, in the name of a truly impartial science of man. In the chapters that follow, I will argue that Book Two of Hume's *Treatise*, '*Of the Passions*', displays a considerable unity of purpose when read through this interpretive lens. I do so by placing the three different parts of Book Two in what I take to be their most relevant intellectual contexts, beginning, in this chapter, with Book Two, Part One, '*Of Pride and Humility*'.

When embarking upon such a project, however, one ought to admit upfront that we have precious little information as to what Hume was reading while he projected and composed the *Treatise*. As such, any account of the intellectual origins of any of its parts will involve some kind of speculation. This said, there

are better and worse conjectures, and supposing that Bernard Mandeville was an important influence upon Hume's thinking upon the passions is among the more credible. For while we have no direct evidence that Hume read Mandeville in his early years (we have no inscribed copies of Mandeville's works, for instance, as we do for Shaftesbury and Malebranche), there is plenty of circumstantial evidence to suggest that Hume was reading Mandeville closely from a young age.[118]

It is notable, for instance, that we find strong traces of Mandeville in Hume's early letters, both before and after the publication of the *Treatise*. Hume's observation to Chevalier Ramsey upon first moving to France that the supposed 'real politeness' of the French was an artifice invented to 'supply the defect of real politeness'[119], suggests that Hume was familiar with Mandeville's thought before settling in La Flèche to compose the *Treatise*; and his later characterisation of his *Treatise* philosophy as the observations of an 'anatomist'[120], in a letter to Francis Hutcheson, would appear to be an allusion to Mandeville's conception of himself as performing a 'strange anatomy of human nature', in which his aim was to give an accurate, rather than edifying, account of human thought and action.[121]

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[118] We do know that Hume owned a 1723 edition of Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, but we do not know when he purchased it. See here, David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, (2 Vols.) (ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton) Oxford University Press, 2007, Vol 2, p. 1022**.** For a detailed account of Hume's early years and reading see, James A. Harris, *Hume: An Intellectual Biography*, Cambridge University Press, 2015 (*Hume*), pp. 35-77.

[119] David Hume, *Letters of David Hume (Vol. 1)*, (ed. J. Y. T. Greig), Oxford University Press, 1969 (*Letters*), p. 20.

[120] Hume *Letters*, pp. 32-33. See also T 3.3.6.6, SBN 620-621.

[121] See Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Publick Benefits,* (2 vols.) (ed. F.B. Kaye) Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, 1988), Vol 2 (*Fable Part II*), p. 93; see also Bernard Mandeville '*An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour and the Usefulness of Christianity in War*' London. 1732 (*Honour*), pp. 4-6.

For these and other reasons,[122] the claim that Mandeville was a key influence upon Hume is nothing new. Indeed, Mandeville is well recognised as one of the major influences upon Hume's moral and political philosophy.[123] By the same measure, however, Mandeville's writings are notoriously difficult to interpret, and this makes the question of Hume's engagement with Mandeville an especially difficult one to answer.[124] For Mandeville was a polemicist, and would adjust and refine his arguments in response to his various polemical engagements. Not only this, but Mandeville's works are laced with irony, especially as regards his characterisation of himself as a defender of revealed faith. As such, it is no easy matter to pin down what Mandeville's exact position was, let alone Hume's engagement with him.

This is especially true of any attempt to assess Hume's engagement with Mandeville's account of self-approbation, or pride, and self-disapprobation, or shame. Pride and shame, both natural and artificial, play a crucial role in all of Mandeville's anthropological writings. And Hume's choice to begin his science of

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[122] Wright (2012) argues convincingly that Hume's earliest known piece of philosophical writing, '*An historical essay on chivalry and modern honour*', was influenced by Mandeville. See John Wright, 'Hume on the Origin of Modern Honour: A Study in Hume's Philosophical Development', in Ruth Savage (Ed.), *Philosophy and Religion in Enlightenment Britain: New Case Studies*, Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 187-205.

[123] See here, Mikko Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume: Anatomists of Civil Society*, Voltaire Foundation: Oxford, 2013 (*Mandeville and Hume*); Harris, *Hume*, pp. 102-116; Christopher J. Findlay, *Hume's Social Philosophy: Human Nature and Commercial Sociability in* A Treatise of Human Nature, Continuum, 2007 (*Hume's Social Philosophy*); John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples, 1780-1760*, Cambridge University Press, 2005 (*The Case for the Enlightenment*), pp. 289-324; E.J. Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable: Bernard Mandeville and the Discovery of Society*, Cambridge University Press, 1994 (*The Enlightenment's Fable*), pp. 82-86; James Moore, 'The social background of Hume's science of human nature', in David Fate Norton, Nicholas Capaldi and Wade L. Robinson (eds.), *McGill Hume Studies*, Austin Hill Press (*Hume's Science of Human Nature*), 1979.

[124] For a book-length study of the many-sided character of Mandeville's thought see Hector Munro, *The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, Oxford University Press, 1975.

the passions with his own analysis of pride and humility is surely a sign of his intent to engage Mandeville's thought head on. At the same time, however, Mandeville's conception of self-approbation and self–disapprobation becomes increasingly refined as his writings progress. Indeed pride and shame arguably end up as his most sophisticated concepts. Thus the question of what Hume took from Mandeville here, as well as what he left behind, very much depends upon where one thinks Mandeville's conception of pride and shame ends up; and how far it departs from where he began.

In what follows I attempt to answer this question. The upshot of my investigation is a reading on which Hume's fundamental aim is to liberate Mandeville's experimental account of our self-regarding affections from its reliance upon the Christian dogma of the Fall. This is a somewhat delicate interpretive claim. For while Mandeville took great pleasure in detecting what he called 'the corruption of our nature'[125], there is reason to doubt that Mandeville considered this to be serious anthropology. Instead we might read Mandeville's insistence on 'the Meanness and Deficiency of our Nature'[126] as a rhetorical device that was intended to drive home what is arguably the central claim of his philosophical anthropology, namely that 'the Fitness of Man for Society, beyond other Animals … is a Compound, that consists in a Concurrence of several Things, and not in any one palpable Quality, that Man is endued with, and Brutes are destitute of'[127]. My claim, however, is that Hume believed Mandeville had failed to keep his rhetoric and his anthropology apart, and – whether wittingly or not – had incorporated

[125] See Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 356.
[126] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 304.
[127] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 188.

religious beliefs into his putatively impartial descriptions of man's self-regarding affections.

This is a reading that compliments, but also challenges, what could be called the prevailing wisdom regarding the nature of Hume's engagement with Mandeville. For, broadly speaking, there seems to be a consensus that Hume was inspired by Mandeville's claim to be developing an impartial assessment of human beings 'as they really are', rather than trying to teach men 'what they should be'[128]. Furthermore, it is generally recognised that Hume, like Mandeville, considered an examination of our self-regarding affections to be central to such a project.[129] Within this framework, however, Hume is most commonly thought to have rejected Mandeville's claim that human beings, as we find them, are fundamentally selfish.[130] Instead Hume looks to develop a theory of pride, shame, etc., that is compatible with a view of human creatures as naturally sociable.[131] On my reading, by contrast, there is very little that Hume rejected in Mandeville's account of human nature at the level of empirical description; especially if we take Mandeville's later, more sophisticated anthropology as our guide. What Hume was concerned to achieve, rather, was an *a*moral account of man's natural self-centredness.[132]

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[128] See here Harris, *Hume*, pp. 53-63; Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, pp. 153-7; Findlay, *Hume's Social Philosophy*, pp. 46-49; Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment*, pp. 289-91; Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable*, 84-6; Moore, *Hume's Science of Human Nature*, pp. 28-32.

[129] See here Harris, *Hume*, pp. 27, 106-7; Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, pp. 153-7; Findlay, *Hume's Social Philosophy*, pp. 88-90; Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment*, pp. 293-6; Moore, *Hume's Science of Human Nature*, pp. 32-41.

[130] Tolonen is arguably an exception here.

[131] See here Harris, *Hume*, p. 107; Findlay, *Hume's Social Philosophy*, pp. 105-123; Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment*, pp. 291-2; Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable*, 84-6; Moore, *Hume's Science of Human Nature*, pp. 39-41.

[132] In this respect my account of Hume's engagement with Mandeville is most similar to Tolonen's. It is my opinion, however, that in his attempt to stress the depth of Mandeville's

My argument consists of three parts. In the first part (section 2) I develop an account of what we might hazard to call Mandeville's 'system' of our self-regarding affections: of pride, shame, the love of praise, and the aversion to infamy. My aim here is to present an account of Mandeville's mature thought on our self-regarding affections that is faithful to, yet independent of, the larger shifts in his thinking regarding the origin of various moral institutions. To this end I focus on Mandeville's increasingly comprehensive reductive ambitions, rather than on the shifting place of various affections within his broader explanatory framework. In particular, I focus on Mandeville's attempt to reduce our self-regarding affections to the effects of a single underlying instinct that he coins 'self-liking'.

With an account of Mandeville's system of our self-regarding affections in place, I then turn to examine Hume's account of the same in Part One of Book Two of the *Treatise* (section 3). Here I first provide a sketch of Hume's account of pride, humility, the love of fame and aversion to infamy that situates these passions within Hume's broader science of the mind. Having done so, I then consider the implications of Hume's novel account of the origin of these passions for Mandeville's hypothesis that these affections all originate in an instinctual 'self-liking'. Here I argue that Hume's 'indirect' account of our self-regarding affections functions to divorce Mandeville's astute psychological observations

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influence upon Hume, Tolonen is insufficiently attentive to the manner in which Hume's system of our self-regarding affections deliberately departs from Mandeville's; such that Tolonen's Hume effectively incorporates Mandeville's religious dogmas, and their attendant moral anxieties, into his account of our self-regarding passions, rather than – as I shall argue – systematically excising such dogmas and anxieties.

from the conception of self-worth that he had built into his account of 'self-liking'.

In the final part of my analysis (section 4) I argue that, by Hume's lights, the conception of self-worth within Mandeville's account of self-liking was inherently moralised. Furthermore, I claim that the moral judgements that Mandeville incorporates into his anthropology were conditioned by the religious dogma that human beings, as we find them, are essentially contemptible, compared to an imagined ideal of perfect benevolence. Thus the ultimate aim of Hume's engagement with Mandeville, as I see it, was to remove his superstitious moral prejudices from his otherwise impartial science of man. Hume does this, I claim, by developing an account of man's self-regarding affections that is equally applicable to both moral creatures and non-moral creatures.

Having made out this argument, I conclude by reflecting that, at the level of empirical description, Hume quite clearly thinks that Mandeville was right to stress that human creatures are fundamentally self-centred. Indeed, when Hume proceeds to discuss our other-regarding affections in Part Two of Book Two, his chief interest is to show how these passions naturally tend to wheel back around to our self. As such, while Hume does say that '[w]e can form no wish which has not a reference to society' (T 2.2.5.15, SBN 363), what he shows is that our wishes naturally centre upon our self, and on our own place in society. In this way, I contend, Hume's conception of human nature is deeply indebted to Mandeville's; perhaps more so than any other thinker: such that we might read

Hume's account of the passions, on the whole, as Mandeville without the moralising.

2. Mandeville's System of Man's Self-Regarding Affections

As mentioned, self-approbation and self-disapprobation play a central role in Mandeville's anthropological thinking. Pride and shame, he says, contain 'the seeds of most virtues'[133]; and references to these passions appear in almost all his explanations of different social phenomena. The fear of shame keeps us from vice, but it can also lead us to kill.[134] Our pride drives us together, by stimulating industry, but it reveals a basic contempt for those around us, and thus also drives us apart.[135] Yet, without these passions – whether good or bad – we would be missing our 'chiefest ingredients'[136].

However, despite the importance of pride and shame to Mandeville's philosophy of human nature, it is in *Part II* of the *Fable of the Bees* (1729), a loose sequel to the original *Fable* (1714, 1723), that Mandeville first attempts what we might call a 'system' of prideful behaviour, both natural and artificial, in terms of an instinct he calls 'self-liking'.[137] And it is only in his *Enquiry into the Origin of Honour* (1732), published three years later, that he arrives at a unified explanation of pride and shame, the love of praise and dread to infamy, as the products of an underlying instinctual 'self-liking'. My focus, then, will be on these

[133] Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Publick Benefits,* (2 vols.) (ed. F.B. Kaye) Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, 1988). Vol 1 (*Fable*). pp. 66-7.
[134] See here Mandeville, *Fable*, pp. 74-8.
[135] See here Mandeville, *Fable*, p. 124.
[136] Mandeville, *Fable*, p. 45.
[137] For a detailed publication history of the *Fable* see Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, pp. 103-46.

later writings, although I will draw on Mandeville's earlier writings when appropriate.

2.1 The Instinct of Self-liking

When Mandeville introduces self-liking in *Part II* of the *Fable*, he describes it as 'a real liking to [one's] own Being' that nature has 'given to all animals' so as to encourage self-preservation.[138] When returning to examine self-liking in *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, Mandeville describes it as 'that great value, which all individuals set upon their own person; that High-Esteem which I take all men to be born with for themselves'[139]. Towards this point, Mandeville explains that,

> to encrease the Care in Creatures to preserve themselves, Nature has given them an Instinct, by which every Individual values itself above its real Worth; this in us, I mean, in Man, seems to be accompany'd with a Diffidence, arising from a Consciousness, or at least an Apprehension, that we do over-value ourselves: It is this that makes us so fond of the Approbation, Liking and Assent of others; because they strengthen and confirm us in the good Opinion we have of ourselves.[140]

To pre-empt somewhat our discussion of Hume's engagement with Mandeville, we can say that Mandeville conceives of one's self as the object of an instinctual high esteem, which he calls self-liking, and that this instinctual high self-esteem

[138] Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Publick Benefits,* (2 vols.) (ed. F.B. Kaye) Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, 1988). Vol 2 (*Fable Part II*). p. 129.
[139] Mandeville, *Honour*, p. 3.
[140] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 130.

is an over-valuation of one's 'real worth'. This high self-esteem, in humans, is 'accompany'd with a diffidence' that arises from an 'apprehension' that our self-esteem is too high, relative to our 'real worth'. It is this ambivalence that produces our love of praise, because praise 'strengthen[s] and confirm[s] us in the good Opinion we have of ourselves'.

Whenever Mandeville discusses self-liking he takes pains to point out that self-liking is distinct from self-love.[141] In particular, while Mandeville understands both self-liking and self-love to be instincts that nature has endowed creatures with, he holds that self-love 'induces [a creature] to labour for his maintenance and safety, and makes him fond of every thing which he imagines to tend to his preservation'[142], whereas self-liking induces that same creature to 'seek for Opportunities, by Gestures, Looks, and Sounds, to display the value it has for itself, superior to what it has for others'[143]. This is not to say, however, that self-love and self-liking are independent of each other. Rather, self-liking is a condition of self-love, as 'no creature can love what it dislikes'[144]. Indeed, Mandeville conjectures that the reason why we find self-love to be such an 'unalterable' aspect of human nature is because self-liking is a 'permanent' fixture of our psychology.[145]

Mandeville believed that his identification of self-liking was a novel discovery in the moral sciences. The veracity of this claim is debatable, yet, whatever the case,

[141] See here, Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, pp. 129-134; Mandeville, *Honour*, p. 3.
[142] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 134.
[143] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 133.
[144] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 129; see also Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 136.
[145] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 129.

what Mandeville believed himself to have discovered was that 'politeness', which was generally believed to be a disposition unique to humans, was essentially the same as animal pride.[146] More precisely, what Mandeville claimed was that while 'self-liking' expressed itself in all creatures as "pride", the self-liking of human creatures had taken on 'polite' forms that were distinct from animal pride. For example, Mandeville held that:

> When a Man exults in his Pride, and gives a loose to that Passion, the Marks of it are as visible in his Countenance, his Mien, his Gate, and Behaviour, as they are in a prancing Horse, or a strutting Turkeycock. These are all very odious; every one feeling the same Principle within, which is the Cause of those Symptoms … These therefore have in all Societies been strictly prohibited by common Consent, in the very Infancy of good Manners; and Men have been taught, in the room of them, to substitute other Symptoms, equally evident with the first, but less offensive, and more beneficial to others.[147]

This prohibition on the 'open expression' of self-liking is what Mandeville calls 'politeness', and the effect of its invention is to 'play [self-liking] against itself, and … to change the natural Home-bred Symptoms of it, for artificial Foreign ones'.[148] In particular, Mandeville thinks that polite human beings replace the natural 'marks and tokens' of self-liking which are 'all the world over the same'

[146] For a discussion of 'politeness' as understood by Mandeville's contemporaries, see Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, pp. 194-204.
[147] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, pp. 125-6.
[148] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 125.

for 'symptoms [that] may be denied to be what they are'.[149] Examples of these 'artificial' symptoms of self-liking include:

> Fine Cloaths, and other Ornaments about them, the Cleanliness observed about their Persons, the Submission that is required of Servants, costly Equipages, Furniture, Buildings, Titles of Honour, and every thing that Men can acquire to make themselves esteem'd by others, without discovering any of the Symptoms that are forbid.[150]

The chief benefit of these 'artificial' symptoms of self-liking is that they allow people to gratify their self-liking, yet to do so without offending anyone. This is because unlike the natural symptoms of self-liking, which are clear marks of an animal pride, artificial symptoms may be denied to be what they are, and this very 'condescension' is pleasing to others.[151] Indeed it is the essence of politeness to attempt to disguise one's self-liking by denying that one's praiseworthy qualities and ornaments are grounds for self-esteem, a dissimulation 'which the same good Manners teach us never to refute, nor easily to disbelieve'.[152]

2.2 Self-Liking and the Origin of Honour

Having given an initial account of Mandeville's conception of self-liking we can turn to examine the role that he thinks self-liking plays in the origin of honour. Honour, according to Mandeville, is similar to politeness. Namely, honour is a

[149] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 126.
[150] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 126.
[151] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 126.
[152] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 126.

convention that human beings have invented as a means of regulating the expression of self-liking. At the same time, however, honour is distinct from politeness insofar as honour regulates the expression of self-liking through the sanctioning some expressions of it, and the refusal to sanction others; whereas politeness regulates the expression of self-liking by redirecting the expression of self-liking into easily disguisable artificial symptoms.

More precisely, Mandeville held that since,

> all human creatures are born with [self-liking] … tho' they know no name for the thing itself, it is impossible that they should long converse together in society without finding out, not only that others are influenc'd with it as well as themselves, but likewise which way to please or displease one another on account of this passion.[153]

In particular, Mandeville believed that men soon learn to show their satisfaction with other people by confirming them in their self-liking, and to show their dissatisfaction with other people by denying their self-liking. To explain how this works, Mandeville suggests that:

> When *A* performs an action which, in the eyes of *B*, is laudable, *B* wishes well to *A*; and, to shew him his satisfaction, tells him, that such an action is an honour to him, or that he ought to be honoured for it: By saying this, *B*, who knows that all men are affected with self-liking, intends to acquit *A*, that he thinks him in the right to gratify and indulge himself in the passion of self-liking.[154]

[153] Mandeville, *Honour*, p. 8.
[154] Mandeville, *Honour*, p. 8.

The same was true, Mandeville thought, with regard to dishonour. Such that dishonour was invented so as to show one's dissatisfaction with another's actions, and to 'acquit' them that they are wrong to gratify their self-liking. In fact, it is not only the laudable and odious *actions* of others that we honour or dishonour, according to Mandeville. Rather, we honour those 'who act, have, or are what we approve of' and we dishonour those who act, have, or are what we disapprove of.[155]

It is especially important to Mandeville that the practices of honouring and dishonouring are understood to be the 'reverse' of each other.[156] For what this shows, Mandeville thinks, is that pride in one's honourable qualities and shame in one's dishonourable qualities are 'different affections of one and the same passion [i.e. self-liking], that are differently observed in us, according as we either enjoy pleasure, or are aggriev'd on account of that passion'.[157] Mandeville regards this claim as being somewhat counter-intuitive, for he realises that 'the symptoms of pride and shame are so vastly different' that it seems 'inconceivable they should proceed from the same passion'[158]. Yet he insists that while 'the symptoms, and if you will the sensations, that are felt in the two cases are … vastly different from one another … no man could be affected with either, if he had not such a passion in his nature, as I call self-liking'.[159]

[155] Mandeville, *Honour*, pp. 9-11.
[156] Mandeville, *Honour*, p. 9.
[157] Mandeville, *Honour*, p. 13.
[158] Mandeville, *Honour*, p. 12.
[159] Mandeville, *Honour*, p. 13.

In arguing like this, Mandeville makes clear that he is correcting the 'errour' he had made in the original *Fable* of believing pride and shame to be 'two distinct passions'[160]. More precisely, Mandeville had initially defined 'Pride' as:

> that Natural Faculty by which every Mortal that has any understanding over-values, and imagines things better of himself than any impartial judge, thoroughly acquainted with all his Qualities and Circumstances, could allow him.[161]

By contrast, he had defined 'the Passion of Shame' as:

> a sorrowful Reflexion on our own Unworthiness, proceeding from an Apprehension that others either do, or might, if they knew all, deservedly despise us.[162]

In defining pride and shame as such, Mandeville was deliberately drawing a close connection between the two. Yet he had maintained that they were distinct passions, since they had such contrasting 'symptoms' and 'sensations'.

However, having come to understand the symptoms and sensation of pride as the effects of an instinctual self-liking, it now made sense to view the symptoms and sensation of shame as effects of the frustration of that same underlying instinct. By way of illustration Mandeville invites his reader to,

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[160] Mandeville, *Honour*, p.12; see also Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Publick Benefits,* (2 vols.) (ed. F.B. Kaye) Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, 1988). Vol 1 (*Fable*) pp. 63-8.
[161] Mandeville, *Fable*, p. 124.
[162] Mandeville, *Fable*, p. 64.

> compare the pleasure of a man, who with an extraordinary appetite is feasting on what is delicious to him, to the torment of another, who is extremely hungry and can get nothing to eat. No two things in the world can be more different, than the pleasure of the one is, from the torment of the other; yet nothing is more evident, than that both are derived from and owing to the same craving principle in our nature, the desire of food; for when this is entirely lost, it is more vexatious to eat, than to let it alone.[163]

Were we to translate this comparison into the language of self-liking, then we might say that to feel the pleasure that is pride is to have one's innate self-liking nourished by reflecting on one's imagined self-worth, whereas to feel the pain that is shame is to have one's innate self-liking starved by reflecting on what one understands (or is made to understand) to be one's unworthiness. Crucially, the underlying cause is the same in both pride and shame, despite their opposite symptoms and sensations. For if we had no innate self-liking then we would feel no displeasure in reflecting on our unworthiness, nor any pleasure in reflecting on our self-worth – just as we take no pleasure in eating, nor feel any displeasure from not eating, when we have no desire for food.

With this point in place we can see how it is that honour and dishonour function to regulate the expression of self-liking, at least insofar as they are effective in modifying one's behaviour. Namely, dishonour functions to curb the expression of self-liking for one's socially disvalued actions, qualities and objects by inducing shame, whereas honour functions to encourage the expression of self-

[163] Mandeville, *Honour*, pp. 13-4.

liking for one's socially valuable actions, qualities and objects by indulging pride. This said, however, we ought to note that, to Mandeville's mind, what others value in our person is not a real property of our actions, qualities, or objects, but consists entirely in the good and bad opinions of those who are making the judgments. Or as Mandeville puts it, those things 'which we thus condemn as vile and odious, need not be so but in our own opinion', for we find that the 'worst of rogues' will shame each other for things that 'the better sort of people' would approve of.[164]

All in all, then, it turns out that Mandeville's system of our self-regarding affections is quite sophisticated: Each person possesses an innate disposition to value themself highly that is nourished by reflecting upon their perceived self-worth and is starved by reflecting upon their perceived unworthiness. This innate self-liking is dishonourable when the personal qualities or possessions that we rejoice in are disapproved of by others, and is discouraged through shaming. On the other hand, when our personal qualities and possessions are approved of by others then our self-liking is honourable, and we are encouraged to indulge it. This said, however, if we indulge our self-liking in an overly proud manner, i.e. as animals do, then we displease others with our 'excessive' self-liking. In light of this, human beings have learnt to replace the animal or 'natural' symptoms of self-liking for 'artificial' ones, such as fine clothes, expensive furniture, and fancy titles. These artificial symptoms allow humans to indulge their self-liking without giving offense to others, and are the mark of a not simply 'civilised', but 'polite' nature.

[164] Mandeville, *Honour*, p. 10.

2.3 The Love of Praise and Dread of Infamy

Alongside the affections of pride and shame, which are both effects of self-liking, Mandeville recognises a distinct passion that he calls 'the love of praise', and its converse 'the dread of infamy', which he also regards as 'the effect' of self-liking.[165] For instance, when returning to self-liking in the *Origin of Honour*, Mandeville asserts:

> That Men are desirous of praise, and love to be applauded by others, is the result, a palpable consequence, of that Self-Liking that Reigns in Human Nature, and is felt in every one's Breast before we have time or capacity to reflect and think of any body else.[166]

Of note here is that Mandeville regards man's love of applause as a consequence not merely of self-liking, but of the fact that self-liking 'Reigns' in human nature, and leads us to form a high opinion of our self, 'before we have time or capacity to reflect and think of any body else'. What this suggests is that we love the applause of others because it confirms the high opinion of our self that we form prior to our reflecting on what others think of us, whether good or bad.

As we have already seen, Mandeville had made this very point when he had first introduced self-liking in *Part II* of the *Fable*, and there is no reason to think that he had changed his position in the intervening three years. To re-iterate,

[165] Mandeville, *Honour*, p. 4.
[166] Mandeville, *Honour*, p. 4.

Mandeville had said that while self-liking was found in all creatures, self-liking 'in us', that is 'in Man':

> seems to be accompany'd with a Diffidence, arising from a Consciousness, or at least an Apprehension, that we do over-value ourselves: It is this that makes us so fond of the Approbation, Liking and Assent of others; because they strengthen and confirm us in the good Opinion we have of ourselves.[167]

What we find, then, is that Mandeville thinks the love of praise arises from a combination of (1) self-liking, which is an over-valuation of our self-worth, and (2) an 'apprehension, that we do over-value ourselves'. More precisely, it is our apprehension that we over-value our self-worth from self-liking that makes us so 'fond' of praise, because praise 'confirms' that others' think as highly of ourselves as we do. Likewise, we 'dread' infamy because others' blame (especially when widespread) confirms what we suspect, namely, that we think too highly of ourselves.

While there is no reason to think that Mandeville's basic conception of the origin of these passions had changed between the publication of *Part II* of the *Fable* and the *Origin of Honour*, it warrants mentioning that his position becomes more sophisticated, given that he had since come to believe that pride and shame were not distinct passions, but were merely 'different affections' of the same instinctual self-liking. To see this, first consider that when Mandeville asserts that the instinctual self-liking of human beings is 'accompany'd with a Diffidence,

[167] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 130.

arising from a Consciousness, or at least an Apprehension, that we do over-value ourselves' there is every reason to believe that this 'diffidence' is shame; given that Mandeville had previously defined shame as: '*a sorrowful Reflexion on our own Unworthiness, proceeding from an Apprehension that others either do, or might, if they knew all, deservedly despise us*'.

Shame, notably, is not a passion that Mandeville ever explicitly attributes to animals. Indeed, Mandeville's point in the above would seem to be that *only* human creatures feel shame alongside their self-liking because, being rational creatures, only they are capable of apprehending that what they instinctually believe their self-worth to be is not what an impartial, all-knowing judge would conclude; given that he had defined pride, and then self-liking, as a instinctual disposition by which every creature 'imagines things better of [their self] than any impartial judge, thoroughly acquainted with all [their] Qualities and Circumstances, could allow'.

Yet, supposing this to be the case, what Mandeville's initial claim amounts to is that the instinctual self-liking of human beings, but not animals, is undermined by a separate instinctual shame – observed only in humans – that arises on account of their apprehending that their 'real worth' is less than what they believe it to be. By contrast, having come to conceive of pride and shame as effects of the same instinctual self-liking, common to all creatures, Mandeville's position becomes that the instinctual self-liking of human creatures – but not animals – is self-undermining, insofar as mankind's having developed reason enables humans to apprehend that their 'real worth' is less than what they

believe it to be. This, it seems to me, was Mandeville's intended point all along, namely that there is a connection between mankind's having developed reason and our shameful 'consciousness … that we do over-value our selves'; such that this particular kind of shame (at least) is a uniquely human phenomenon, and that, because of this, the love of praise and dread of infamy are uniquely human affections. In animals, by contrast, all we find is a desire of superiority, based upon a steadfast self-liking. This desire of superiority may well be frustrated, but it does not tend to become unsettled, as Mandeville thinks man's self-liking does, so as to cause the distinctly human love of praise and dread of infamy.

None of which is to say, however, that the manner in which the love of praise and dread of infamy arise in human creatures is simply a matter of having one's self-liking confirmed or disconfirmed: such that any person or persons' good opinion of us will excite a love of praise, while any person or persons' bad opinion will induce a dread of infamy. Rather, Mandeville holds that:

> When we covert glory, or dread infamy, it is not the good or bad opinion of others that affects us with joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain; but it is the notion we form of that opinion of theirs, and must proceed from the Regard and Value we have for it. If it was otherwise, the most shameless Fellow would suffer as much in his mind from publick disgrace and infamy, as a man that values his Reputation. Therefore it is the Notion we have of things, of our own thought and Something within ourselves that creates the fear of shame.[168]

[168] Mandeville, *Honour*, pp. 41-2

This is to say, in other words, that the love of praise and the fear of shame arise from the value that we place on other people's opinions *as a means of confirming our self-liking*, and not on the value of their opinions *as such*. If we do not regard other people's opinions as being sufficiently authoritative to either confirm or disconfirm our self-liking, then their opinions will have no effect upon our behaviour, regardless of whether they think good or bad of us. If we do, however, then we will strive to maintain a good reputation with them, but not so as to please them, or to avoid displeasing them, but to confirm our own self-liking.

3. Hume on Self-Regarding Affections

Having examined Mandeville's system of our self-regarding affections, we can now examine Hume's account of the same. To this end, it will be useful to first situate Hume's discussion of these affections within his broader science of the mind; both to get to grips with Hume's distinctive terminology, and to evidence the clearly discernible presence of Mandeville behind Hume's thinking. As such, I will begin by giving a sketch of Hume's system of pride and humility, before considering the implications of Hume's system of these passions for Mandeville's system.

3.1. Pride and Humility within Hume's Science of the Mind

Hume divides all the perceptions of the mind into two types, impressions and ideas. All ideas, Hume thinks, are fainter 'copies' of impressions (see T 1.1.1, SBN

1-7). Impressions are then divided into those that are '*original*' and those that are '*secondary*', where:

> Original impressions or impressions of sensation are such as without any antecedent perception arise in the soul, from the constitution of the body, from the animal spirits, or from the application of objects to the external organs. Secondary, or reflective impressions are such as proceed from some of these original ones, either immediately or by the interposition of its idea. Of the first kind are all the impressions of the senses, and all bodily pains and pleasures: Of the second are the passions, and other emotions resembling them.
>
> (T 2.1.1.1, SBN 275)

Passions, then, according to Hume, are 'impressions of reflection'; which is to say that they are impressions caused by prior perceptions: either by 'impressions of sensation', or by their ideas. Generally speaking, Hume thinks, the 'chief spring' of the passions is the 'perception of pain and pleasure' (T 1.3.10.2, SBN 118), this said, however, there are a number of passions that do not arise from perceptions of either pleasure or pain. For example, Hume thinks that 'benevolence' towards those whom we love arises 'by the original constitution of the mind' (T 2.2.6.6, SBN 368), rather than from any perception of pleasure or pain (see also T 2.3.9.8, SBN 439). Similarly, he thinks that certain bodily appetites raise desires for those objects which nature has disposed the mind to think of whenever they occur, without our first perceiving these objects as either pleasant or painful: such as our 'hunger' for food when we are hungry, and our 'lust' for sexual gratification when we are lustful (T 2.3.9.8, SBN 439). Hume acknowledges that these

'stubborn' desires do not 'quadrate exactly' with his 'system', insofar as they do not arise from pleasure and pain, yet he regards this as a slight complication of his 'system', rather than as being 'contrary' to it (see T 2.2.6.2, SBN 366-7).

Hume divides the passions into those that are 'direct' and those that are 'indirect' (T 2.1.1.4, SBN 276-7). Hume's attempt to articulate this distinction is complicated by the aforementioned 'stubborn' desires, yet his final view would seem to be that 'direct' passions originate from *singular* properties of the mind: this happens with benevolence, hunger, and lust, which are each said to arise from their own inexplicable 'natural impulse' (T 2.3.9.8, SBN 439); but also with the various different desires and aversions that are produced by the mind's '*original* instinct … to unite itself with the good, and to avoid the evil' (T 2.3.9.2; SBN 438). In contrast, *in*direct passions originate in the *conjunction* of a number of different mental impulses, such that their origins in human nature are explicable in terms of the interaction of different properties of the mind (see T 2.1.1.4, SBN 276).[169]

[169] This is my understanding of Hume's distinction between direct and indirect passions. Hume introduces this novel distinction at the very beginning of Book Two, where he claims that both direct and indirect passions arise 'from good and evil' but that direct passions do so 'immediately' while indirect passions do so 'by the conjunction of other qualities' (T 2.1.1.4, SBN 276-7). Hume himself never attempts to justify or explain this distinction any further, and, if anything, he only ever serves to obfuscate it through negligent use of technical terms (most notably his use of the term 'desire' to describe both direct *and* indirect passions (see here, for example, T 2.3.9.7, SBN 439 and T 2.2.9.3; SBN 382)), and his later claim that 'direct passions frequently arise from a natural impulse or instinct, which is perfectly unaccountable … [t]hese passions, properly speaking, produce good and evil, and proceed not from them, like other affections' (T 2.3.9.8, SBN 439). In light of this, it is my opinion that we ought to opt for the simplest explanation of Hume's direct-indirect distinction that is consistent with these claims: namely, that 'direct' passions arise 'immediately' from a *singular* 'natural impulse' (whether from our natural impulse towards pleasant things and away from painful things, or from some other natural impulse) whereas 'indirect' passions arise from the 'conjunction' of *multiple* natural impulses (including, for instance, an association of ideas conjoined with an association of impressions). There may well be other features that serve to distinguish what Hume calls 'indirect' passions from 'direct' ones, but if there are (and I am not convinced there are) then these are in addition to this most basic feature. For further reading on this topic see: Norman

It is into this system of the passions that Hume introduces the passions of pride and humility. These two passions, Hume says, are 'directly contrary' to each other – by which he means that pride is a pleasing impression of reflection, while humility is a painful one (T 2.1.2.2, SBN 277; see also T 2.1.5.4, SBN 286). This said, however, Hume asserts that:

> 'Tis evident, that pride and humility, tho' directly contrary, have yet the same OBJECT. This object is self, or that succession of related ideas and impressions, of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness. Here the view always fixes when we are actuated by either of these passions. According as our idea of ourself is more or less advantageous, we feel either of those opposite affections, and are elated with pride, or dejected with humility.
>
> (T 2.1.2.2, SBN 277)

Hume's manner of presentation is more reserved than Mandeville's, if not studiedly so. This said, however, there are clear parallels to Mandeville's description of shame as 'a sorrowful reflexion on our own unworthiness' and of pride as a man's 'rejoic[ing] at his being'[170]. Also like Mandeville, Hume holds that 'nature' has 'assign'd' the idea of '*self*' to both pride and humility by an

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Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume,* Palgrave Macmillan, (1941), pp. 164-9; Louis E. Loeb, 'Hume's Moral Sentiments and the Structure of the *Treatise*', *Journal of the History of Philosophy,* 15 (1977), pp. 385-403; James Fieser, 'Hume's classification of the passions', *Hume Studies* 18:1 (1992), pp. 1-17; Jane L. McIntyre, 'Hume's Passions: Direct and Indirect', *Hume Studies* 26:1 (2000), p. 77-86; Haruko Inoue, 'The origin of the indirect passions in the *Treatise*: An analogy between Books 1 and 2', *Hume Studies* 29:2 (2003), pp. 205-221; Rachel Cohon, 'Hume's indirect passions', in *A Companion to Hume*, (ed. Elizabeth Radcliffe), Oxford: Blackwell Publishing (2007), pp. 159-184; Amyas Merivale, 'Hume's Mature Account of the Indirect Passions', *Hume Studies*, 35 (2009), pp. 185-210; Samuel C. Rickless, 'Hume's theory of Pity and Malice', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 21:2 (2013), pp. 324–344.

[170] Mandeville, *Fable*, p. 67-8.

'original property' of the mind (T 2.1.5.6, SBN 287); such that the 'distinguishing characteristic' of these two passions is that they turn our attention to our self (T 2.1.3.3, SBN 280). In this way, Hume says, the passions of pride and humility are similar to '[t]he sensations of hunger and lust' insofar as such impressions 'always produce in us the idea of those peculiar objects, which are suitable to each appetite' (T 2.1.5.6, SBN 287). Here we might see further parallels to Mandeville's conception of pride and shame as 'different affections' – pleasant and painful – of the same underlying instinct of 'self-liking', which nature has implanted in creatures to assist their self-preservation; similar to how the pleasures and pains of hunger are merely different affections of the same underlying appetite, which nature has implanted in creatures so as to keep them alive.

At the same time, however, Hume is careful not to push the similarities between pride, humility, and the 'sensations of hunger and lust' too far. For the sensations of hunger and lust, both good (joy) and bad (grief), arise from their distinctive natural appetites, i.e. hunger and lust. This, as we have seen, makes these impressions 'direct' passions, on Hume's account. By contrast, Hume argues that pride and humility are what he calls 'indirect' passions, or passions that arise from a conjunction of mental impulses. In particular, Hume thinks that pride and humility arise from the conjunction of two distinct principles of mental association, namely, what he calls 'the association of ideas' – by which all resembling, contiguous and causally related ideas form natural connections in the mind – as well as 'a like association of impressions' – by which 'all resembling impressions are connected together' (see here T 2.1.4, SBN 282-4).

More precisely, Hume argues that if we examine the 'vast variety' of 'subjects' that we take pride in and feel ashamed of, we find that all such 'subjects' 'are either parts of ourselves, or something nearly related to us' (T 2.1.5.2, SBN 285). Towards this point, Hume observes that '[e]very valuable quality of the mind' and 'the body' may serve as 'the causes of pride; and their opposites humility' (T 2.1.2.5, SBN 279), as well as 'whatever objects are in the least ally'd or related to us', such as '[o]ur country, family, children, relations, riches, houses, gardens, horses, dogs, cloaths' (T 2.1.2.5, SBN 279). It ought to be noted that Hume finds it difficult to give a precise account of what is required for any 'subject' of pride or humility to count as being sufficiently 'ally'd or related to' one's self to cause these passions (see T 2.1.6, SBN 290-4). Yet his general point is that there is always some relation between the 'subjects' of pride and humility and our idea of our own person, no matter how capricious; much like how Mandeville regarded all the various 'symptoms' of self-liking as having some relation to one's self, no matter how 'artificial'.

Having made this observation, Hume then claims that if we examine the different 'qualities' possessed by the various 'subjects' of pride and humility, then we find that 'every cause of pride, by its peculiar qualities, produces a separate pleasure [to that of pride], and of humility a separate uneasiness [to that of humility]' (T 2.1.5.1, SBN 285). With these two observations in place, Hume then conjectures that the passions of pride and humility arise from (1) an association of *ideas* between the (self-related) 'subjects' of these passions and their 'object' (the self), and (2) an association of *impressions* between the pleasant and painful 'qualities'

of these 'subjects' and the pleasant and painful sensations of the passions themselves (see here T 2.1.5, SBN 285-90). As such, we find that whenever a pleasing object acquires an appropriately strong connection to oneself, it becomes a subject of pride, and when a displeasing object acquires a similar connection it becomes a subject of humility.[171]

As befits such a novel account of the origin of pride and humility, Hume devotes considerable time to establishing its veracity. To this end, Hume demonstrates the applicability of his theory to both the 'more natural and immediate' causes of pride and humility, such as our virtuous and vicious qualities of mind and character, as well as our physical beauty and deformity (T 2.1.7-8, SBN 294-303); but also to those causes of pride and humility that are 'foreign and extrinsic': such as our 'external advantages and disadvantages' and our 'property and riches' (T 2.1.9-10, SBN 303-316). Having demonstrated that his theory accounts for these 'original causes of pride and humility', Hume then accounts for 'a secondary one', namely, 'the opinions of others', both good and bad, as to our 'reputation' and 'character' – which he says have 'an equal influence on these affections' as the original causes of pride and humility do (T 2.1.11.1, SBN 316), but which also have the distinctive effect of producing both our 'desire of fame, and aversion to infamy' (T 2.1.11.11, SBN 321). Having accounted for all these causes of pride and humility, as well as for the origin of our love of fame and aversion to infamy, Hume then argues that his 'hypothesis' regarding the origin

[171] As to what constitutes an appropriately strong connection in this case, see the section *Limitations of this system* (T 2.1.6, SBN 290-4).

of these passions in humans is equally applicable to the pride and humility of animals (T 2.1.12, SBN 324-8).

3.2 Implications of Hume's System for Mandeville's System

There are echoes of Mandeville throughout Hume's account of the origins of pride, humility, the love of fame and aversion to infamy. If nothing else this suggests that Hume was drawing inspiration from Mandeville's observations on these passions as he developed his own view. At the same time, however, it is clear that Hume regarded his hypothesis that pride and humility are the 'indirect' products of a 'double relation of ideas and impressions' (T 2.1.5.5, SBN 286) as instituting a revolution in the explanation of these passions (see here T 2.1.3.7, SBN 282). There was simply nothing quite like it that had come before.[172] As such, there are good grounds to read Hume's account of our self-regarding affections as his attempting a break with all that had come before him, both ancient and modern, rather than as an engagement with any particular thinker. Yet, by the same measure, insofar as Hume successfully institutes such a break, there will be implications for Mandeville's account of our self-regarding affections, and insofar as we have reason to think that Hume was engaging with Mandeville closely as he developed his view, then we have reason to think that Hume was deliberately setting his system against Mandeville's system.

[172] For an account of the novelty of Hume's account, vis-à-vis accounts of the passions in general, see Jane L. McIntyre, 'Hume's 'New and extraordinary' account of the passions', in *The Blackwell Guide to Hume's Treatise*, (ed. Saul Traiger), Malden, MA: Blackwell, (2006) pp. 199-215.

That this was the case becomes clear if we consider what Hume's system entails for Mandeville's claim that self-liking is an instinctual disposition to *over*-value one's self-worth, relative to one's 'real worth'; which he understood as the value that an impartial, all-knowing judge would ascribe to one's person, given one's 'qualities and circumstances'. This, it seems fair to say, is the fundamental claim of Mandeville's entire system of our self-regarding affections. For, not only is the instinctual over-estimation of one's self-worth precisely what pride consists in, but, as we have seen, the apprehension that one's 'real' worth is less than what one instinctually believes one's worth to be is the cause of a distinctly human shame, as well as the distinctly human love of praise and dread of infamy.

On Hume's account, by contrast, our pride is not an over-valuation of our self-worth. Rather, while our pride may lead us to over-value our self-worth, relative to what an impartial judge might make of us (indeed Hume thinks that this tends to be the case (see here T 2.2.4.8, SBN 355 and T 3.3.2.10, SBN 598)) this is not what pride *is*. Instead our pride, Hume thinks, is simply 'that agreeable impression, which arises in the mind, when the view either of our virtue, beauty, riches or power makes us satisfy'd with ourselves' (T 2.1.7.8, SBN 297). Nor is our pride characteristically attended with a 'diffidence' arising from an apprehension that we over-value our self. Rather, as Hume takes considerable pains to convince his readers, if both our pride and our humility were to arise simultaneously, then they would cancel each other out: for they are 'directly contrary' impressions, and they each direct our attention to the same 'object' by an 'original' property of the mind (see here T 2.1.2.3, SBN 277-8 and T 2.1.5.7, SBN 287-8). This being the case, Hume holds that these passions must arise in

turn, from separate reflections upon our qualities and circumstances; where our good qualities and circumstances cause pride, and our bad ones humility.

What we find, then, it would seem, is that Hume's account of pride and humility as 'indirect' 'impressions of reflection' effectively serves to divorce the empirical content of Mandeville's account of pride and shame from the conception of self-worth that – by Hume's lights – Mandeville had illicitly built in to his empirical observations. For, while Hume adopts much of what Mandeville describes as occurring in the experience of pride and shame, as well as in honouring and dishonouring, his explanation of these impressions as the 'indirect' products of a conjunction of associative principles effectively cuts all ties between the experience of these affections and what Mandeville presents as each individual's real worthlessness, relative to their imagined self-worth. Indeed, it is not only Hume's account of the origin of pride and humility in which we see this occurring, but also in his account of the origin of the love of fame and aversion to infamy.

For, similar to how he had argued that pride and humility were the products of a 'double relation of ideas and impressions', Hume argues that our love of fame and aversion to infamy arise from the conjunction of two distinct principles of human nature, which he calls 'authority and sympathy' (T 2.1.11.9, SBN 321). More precisely, Hume argues that whenever we are praised for our good qualities, or blamed for our bad qualities,

> nothing is more natural than for us to embrace the opinions of others in this particular; both from *sympathy*, which renders all their sentiments intimately present to us; and from *reasoning*, which makes us regard their judgement, as a kind of argument for what they affirm. These two principles of authority and sympathy influence almost all our opinions; but must have a peculiar influence, when we judge of our own worth and character.
>
> (T 2.1.11.9, SBN 320-1)

Most exactly, Hume claims that when we sympathetically take on others' approving or disapproving sentiments regarding our personal qualities and possessions we come to experience a secondary pride or humility (respectively) on account of the same 'double relation of ideas and impressions' that produces our original pride or humility in these attributes (T 2.1.11.9, SBN 320). This said, however, Hume does not think that the seconding of either our pride or our humility through sympathy is enough *by itself* to cause the love of fame or aversion to infamy. If it were, Hume says, 'fame and infamy wou'd influence us without distinction; and every opinion, according as it were favourable or unfavourable, wou'd equally excite that desire or aversion' (T 2.1.11.11, SBN 321). Instead, Hume observes – just as Mandeville had – that 'we are principally mortify'd with the contempt of persons, upon whose judgement we set some value, and are, in a great measure, indifferent about the opinions of the rest of mankind' (T 2.1.11.11, SBN 321). Thus it is *only* when our 'sympathy' with others' opinions of our self is conjoined with their 'authority' to influence our judgements that we come to experience the love of fame (which Hume generally calls 'vanity' (see here, for instance, T 2.2.5.21, SBN 365 and T 2.2.10.6, SBN

391)), and the aversion to infamy (which he also calls 'shame' (see here T 2.2.10.6, SBN 391 and also T 2.1.10.12, SBN 315-6)).

There are clear traces of Mandeville in Hume's explanation of the origin of the love of fame and aversion to infamy. In particular, Hume seems to straightforwardly adopt Mandeville's claim that we love praise and dread infamy because the opinions of others serve to confirm our self-assessment (at least when we respect their opinions). At the same time, however, there is no trace of Mandeville's belief that these two passions are generated by an innate tendency to over-value our self, plus a concomitant apprehension of our worthlessness in the eyes of an impartial judge. Instead Hume thinks that these passions have an 'indirect' origin in human nature, insofar as they arise from the conjunction of the 'two principles of authority and sympathy'. This being the case, however, we can say that Hume's account of our self-regarding affections, considered on the whole, is a deliberate rejection of the conception of self-worth that Mandeville had built into his otherwise astute observations on pride, shame, the love of praise and dread of infamy.

4. Hume contra Mandeville

Supposing that the above account gives a good description of Hume's engagement with Mandeville's system of our self-regarding affections, what was Hume's intention in setting his system against Mandeville's in this way? We can see that Hume intended to dispense with the conception of self-worth that he believed Mandeville had illicitly built in to his understanding of self-liking, but

what was it about this conception that inspired Hume to attack it? The answer, we ought to note, cannot simply be that Hume believed Mandeville's conception of self-liking was empirically inaccurate. For Hume himself observes that we are naturally more proud of our personal qualities and possessions than we ought to be, simply because these are the things with which we are most familiar (see here T 2.2.4.8, SBN 355). And he at one point writes of the 'almost universal propensity of men to over-value themselves' (T 3.3.2.10, SBN 598). As such, Hume must have thought that, at the level of empirical description, Mandeville's conception of human beings as naturally inclined to over-value themselves was right. Moreover, nothing in Hume's account precludes the possibility that apprehending this fact is amongst the causes of humility, at least in some cases.[173]

Rather, what Hume objected to, I contend, was what he saw as Mandeville's moralisation of our self-regarding affections. For, while Mandeville's conception of self-approbation and self-disapprobation undergoes significant development over the course of his anthropological writings, there is reason to think that his definitional claims remain more or less the same. Most pertinently, our pride is an over-valuation of our self-worth, relative to our 'real worth', which Mandeville conceives as the value that an impartial omniscience would place upon our person. While our shame – at least the shame that is characteristic of human creatures – is a consciousness that our self is despicable in the eyes of an all-knowing impartial judge. Of course, both these affections are eventually

[173] This said, it is questionable whether Hume himself thought that this was a cause for humility. Rather, Hume thought that, generally speaking, it is 'more advantageous to overrate our merit, than to form ideas of it, below its just standard' (T 3.3.2.8, SBN 597).

characterised by Mandeville as the satisfaction and frustration of an instinctual disposition. Yet it remains the case that in self-approbation we over-value our self, compared to what an impartial judge would allow us, and that the self-disapprobation that humans feel upon apprehending that they do over-value their self is the shame of being deservedly despised. Not only this, but our love of praise and dread of infamy are then the products of an anxiety as to our worth in the eyes of an impartial omniscience.

It is reasonable to conclude that Hume read this as Mandeville illicitly importing a moral standard of evaluation into his putatively *a*moral descriptions of pride and shame. As such, it would seem that when Hume sought to divorce Mandeville's empirical observations on pride and shame from the conception of self-worth that he had built into his description of these passions, Hume was targeting what he saw as Mandeville's moralisation of our self-regarding affections. This reading does, it must be acknowledged, chide with Mandeville's repeated assertions that moral distinctions *arise from* the love of praise and dread of infamy, rather than, as I am suggesting, are *built into* these passions.[174] Yet there are two points that we can make here.

The first is that while Mandeville believed that moral distinctions arise from the artificial attempts of politicians to align self-interest with the public interest, Hume explicitly disagreed with Mandeville on this point. Instead, Hume held that it would be 'vain of politicians to talk of *honourable* or *dishonourable*,

[174] See, for example, Mandeville, *Fable*, pp. 41-57, Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, pp. 62-99, 134, and Mandeville, *Honour*, pp. i-xi.

praiseworthy or *blameable*' if we did not first have moral sentiments of pleasure and pain to inform us as to what is morally good and what is morally evil (T 3.2.2.25, SBN 500). As such, while Mandeville himself held that moral distinctions originally arose from the love of praise and dread of infamy, it is nevertheless possible that Hume read Mandeville as smuggling moral distinctions into his definitions of pride and shame, in a manner that was inconsistent with his broader moral philosophy.

The second point is that, as Mandeville intimates in a number of places, our *a posteriori* moral distinctions can be distinguished from an *a priori* standard of moral evaluation that consists in the judgements of a divine being, and is revealed to us in scripture.[175] Indeed, Mandeville at one point explicitly distinguishes between 'Heathen Virtue' (an *a posteriori* "virtue"), and what a 'Christian' is bound to believe is morally good (*a priori* virtue).[176] As such, it is possible to read Mandeville as conceiving of our 'real' self-worth by an *a priori* standard of moral evaluation, namely by the judgement of an impartial omniscience.[177] Either way, Mandeville clearly regards our 'real worth' as our moral worth, as judged by an impartial omniscience. And whether he implicitly measures such worth by unacknowledged moral sentiments, or by an explicit *a priori* moral standard, Hume can be seen to object.

[175] See, for example, Mandeville, *Honour*, p. 30-1; see also Mandeville, *Fable*, pp. 39-40 and Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, pp. 12-9.
[176] Mandeville, *Honour*, p. i.
[177] See here, Munro, *The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, pp. 223-237; Roger Crisp also takes this line, see Roger Crisp, *Sacrifice Regained: Morality and Self-Interest in British Moral Philosophy from Hobbes to Bentham*, Oxford University Press, (2019), pp. 61-4.

Somewhat ironically, then, it would appear that Mandeville's conception of what is morally valuable is the same as Francis Hutcheson's, i.e. impartial benevolence.[178] Unlike Hutcheson, however, Mandeville did not believe that human beings are innately inclined to act in a manner that an impartial omniscience would approve of – namely, from a benevolence that extends to all rational beings. Rather, Mandeville's observations upon human nature had led him to believe that human beings were fundamentally self-centred creatures, who were doomed by their very nature to fall short of this most exacting standard of moral goodness. Thus Mandeville presented his observations as revealing (variously) 'the corruption of our nature'[179], 'the Meanness and Deficiency of our Nature'[180], and 'the wretched Condition of Mortals'[181].

Mandeville's account of our self-regarding affections is of a piece with this general 'Scheme of Deformity': the 'Partizans of which', Mandeville says, 'study chiefly to make every thing in our Nature appear as ugly and contemptible as it is possible'[182]. And while it is difficult to know whether Mandeville's belief in man's lapsarian corruption was genuine, Hume's objection would seem to be that – wittingly or not – Mandeville had managed to fuse the Christian dogma that mankind is essentially deformed into his otherwise impartial account of pride, shame, the love of praise, and dread of infamy. In response, Hume sought to separate Mandeville's astute psychological observations from the moralised conception of man's 'real worth' that he had illicitly built into his account of self-

[178] See here Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises*, (ed. Wolfgang Leidhold), Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, (2004) (*Inquiry*).
[179] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 356.
[180] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 304
[181] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 135.
[182] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 30.

liking. Hume achieves this, we have seen, by explaining our self-regarding affections as the 'indirect' products of various principles of human nature, rather than as the effects of an instinctual self-liking.

Not only this, however, but Hume guarantees the *a*morality of his own theory by demonstrating that his hypotheses regarding the causes of our self-regarding affections can be extended to account for these passions in animals (see T 2.1.12, SBN 324-8). As such, we might say that Hume's system of our self-regarding affections ultimately serves to turn Mandeville's commitment to giving an impartial account of human nature back upon itself. For Mandeville too had sought to explain our self-regarding affections without supposing any essential difference between human beings and animals. Indeed we saw that Mandeville had introduced self-liking into his anthropology so as to explain that polite forms of self-esteem are essentially no different to animal pride. At the same time, however, Mandeville had supposed that the cause of moral shame, as well as of our love of praise and dread of infamy, was the apprehension of our worthlessness, in the eyes of an impartial omniscience, upon our having come to attain the knowledge of good and evil. To Hume's mind, however, this explanation was simply the Christian story of the Fall in an experimental guise, and he dispensed with it accordingly.

5. Conclusion

My aim in the above has been to give an account of Hume's engagement with Mandeville as regards his conception of self-approbation and self-

disapprobation. What we ultimately find, I claim, is that Hume's fundamental aim was to liberate Mandeville's experimental account of our self-regarding affections from its reliance upon the Christian dogma of the Fall. To this end, I have shown that Hume's 'indirect' account of our self-regarding affections functions to divorce Mandeville's astute psychological observations from the moralised conception of self-worth that Hume thought Mandeville had built into his account of 'self-liking'. Not just this, but I have argued that Hume understood such moral judgements to have been conditioned by the religious belief that human beings, as we find them, are essentially contemptible, compared to an imagined ideal of perfect benevolence. Hume's engagement with Mandeville, then, was to turn Mandeville's commitment to giving an impartial account of human nature back upon Mandeville himself.

Having come to see this, however, a question arises as to Hume's engagement with Mandeville at the level of empirical description, minus Mandeville's superstitious prejudices. For another thing I have shown is that there is no good reason to believe that Hume thought Mandeville's description of our tendency to over-value our self was empirically inaccurate. If anything, Hume's 'indirect' account of pride and humility can be seen as developing a more empirically sophisticated account of this very tendency, more or less as Mandeville describes. Indeed, if we compare Hume's system of our self-regarding affections with not only Mandeville's system, but also with Francis Hutcheson's theory that human beings possess an innate sense of what is honourable and dishonourable about their person, and that this is why human beings love praise and dread

infamy,[183] there can be no doubt as to where Hume was taking his cues. It is clear that Hume saw Mandeville's account as the current state of the art, and that he sought to develop it further.

However, this being the case, we might ask where Hume stands on Mandeville's well-known thesis that, as he at one point puts it:

> it is impossible that Man, mere fallen Man, should act with any other View but to please himself while he has the Use of his Organs, and the greatest Extravagancy either of Love or Despair can have no other Centre. There is no difference between Will and Pleasure in one sense, and every Motion made in spite of them must be unnatural and convulsive. Since then Action is so confin'd, and we are always forc'd to do what we please … it is impossible we could be sociable Creatures without Hypocrisy.[184]

For, while we have seen that Hume rejects the religious basis for Mandeville's claim that there is 'no difference between the will and pleasure', he would otherwise agree with it, at least in the 'sense' that Mandeville is getting at. Would Hume agree, then, that human creatures are not 'sociable' creatures?

An important point to note here is that Mandeville himself steps back from such an extreme view. Under pressure from his critics, Mandeville eventually allows that 'the Fitness of Man for Society, beyond other Animals, is something real'; but

[183] See here Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, pp. 151-60; and Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, (ed. Aaron Garrett), Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, (2002), pp. 55-6.
[184] Mandeville, *Fable*, pp. 348-9.

that 'this real Something, this Sociableness' is 'hardly perceptible in Individuals, before great Numbers of them are joyn'd together, and artfully manag'd'[185]. Thus it turns out that even Mandeville allowed that human beings are genuinely sociable creatures, at least those who have been 'educated in a Society, a civil Establishment, of several hundred Years standing'[186]. Indeed, Mandeville even allows that human beings have a degree of 'natural affection' for other human beings.[187] What he denies that is such natural affection is 'instrumental to the Erecting of Societies'[188]; by which he does not mean small family units, but large political communities.

If Hume was reading Mandeville closely, and there is every indication that he was, then we can assume that he was aware of these shifts in Mandeville's thinking. As such, while Hume did think that human beings were naturally sociable, there is no reason to see this as his instituting a self-conscious break with Mandeville's conception of human beings as fundamentally self-centred. In fact, when Hume discusses the passions of love and hatred – our other-regarding analogues of pride and humility – he is clearly concerned to show how these passions link together with pride and humility, so as to naturally centre our thoughts upon ourselves (see here T 2.2.2, SBN 332-47).

All in all, then, it would seem that at the level of empirical description, Hume found Mandeville's thesis that human beings are fundamentally self-centred to not only be plausible, but also an accurate account of what human beings are

[185] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 188.
[186] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 301.
[187] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, pp. 182-3, 189, 201-5, 240, 342.
[188] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 183.

actually like. Hume's objection to Mandeville, however, was that he had based his philosophical anthropology upon an unfavourable comparison between the self-centred creatures that we find ourselves to be, and an imagined ideal of perfect benevolence; rather than upon experience alone. Against this, Hume set out to show that our natural self-centredness was not the product of a fall from grace, but was the product of a gravity-like association of ideas and impressions.

3. Difficulties with Love: Resisting Hutcheson's Ancient Prejudices

1. Introduction

Having argued in chapter one that Hume's novel account of pride, humility, and the love of fame targets the religious prejudices that inform Bernard Mandeville's theory of 'self-liking', I will now turn to examine Hume's account of the passions of love and hatred in Part Two of Book Two, '*Of Love and Hatred*'. Hume's treatment of the passions of love and hatred follows immediately upon his treatment of pride and humility. Given Hume's systematising ambitions, it is no surprise to find that his explanation of the origin of these *other*-regarding passions is the same as that of pride and humility. Namely, that our love and hatred towards others arise through the 'conjunction' of two different associative mental principles – the association of related ideas, and the association of related impressions – or from what Hume calls a 'double relation' of ideas and impressions (T 2.2.1-2, SBN 329-47).

This said, however, while Hume accounts for both our self- and other-regarding passions using the same 'double relation' principle, his exposition of love and hatred is markedly different from his exposition of pride and humility. In particular, Hume's exposition of the origin of pride and humility has a clear

structure. He is obviously concerned to first analyse the causes of these passions into the most general explanatory principle that he can discern (T 2.1.2-6, SBN 277-94), before accounting for the various different particular causes of pride and humility under his general system (T 2.1.7-12, SBN 294-328). By contrast, his exposition of love and hatred lacks any sense of overall structure.

Here Hume first gives the passions of love and hatred a relatively sparse introduction (T 2.2.1, SBN 329-32), before employing a number of metaphorical explanatory devices so as to place what he calls his 'system' of pride, humility, love, and hatred 'beyond doubt' (T 2.2.2, SBN 332-47). Some difficulties with love and hatred are dealt with (T 2.2.3-5, SBN 347-65), and then Hume proceeds to account for passions that are not love and hatred, but are said to be 'mixed' with them (T 2.2.6-11, SBN 366-96). His examples are routinely overstuffed, and their cumulative effect is to produce a complicated explanatory apparatus that one feels Hume is only barely managing to control. By the end of Hume's account of love and hatred one could be forgiven for suspecting that his professed commitment to providing an experimental account of these passions ultimately gives way to a speculative desire to bend love and hatred to the novel 'double relation' hypothesis he had developed to explain the self-regarding passions of pride and humility.

None of which is to suggest that Hume did not have good reasons to attempt an experimental account of love and hatred. Indeed, the precise nature of our other-regarding passions was one of the most hotly contested issues amongst those

philosophers whom Hume lists as his fellow moral experimentalists.[189] Hutcheson, for instance, had drawn from both Locke and Shaftesbury to develop a detailed theory of human motivation in which benevolent desires play a fundamental role in explaining behaviour.[190] Mandeville – as we have just seen – pushed back in the other direction, and attempted to reduce other-regarding passions to what he called 'self-liking', in which we love those who satisfy our self-liking, and hate those who frustrate it.[191] Meanwhile Butler had applied his logical acuity to an analysis of our affections in terms of their objects, a move that ultimately relegated considerations of the 'interestedness' or 'disinterestedness' of our passions to secondary importance.[192] Against this background, it is no surprise that Hume should seek to develop his own explanation of passions such as love, hatred, pity, malice, envy, and even romantic attraction.

Nor is it to say that there is nothing to learn from Hume's unwieldy and overstretched account of love and hatred. In fact it is often when Hume's thought is at its limits that we see what makes his system tick. We get an idea of the importance of sympathy to his overall understanding of human behaviour (see T 2.2.5, 2.2.7 and 2.2.9, SBN 357-65, 368-71, and 381-9), but also of competing principles such as comparison (see T 2.2.8-10, SBN 372-93). We see traces of thinkers outside the British experimental tradition, most notably

[189] See here T *Intro*, SBN xvii and T *Abstract*, SBN 646.
[190] See Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises*, (ed. Wolfgang Leidhold), Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, (2004) (*Inquiry*) and Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, (ed. Aaron Garrett), Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, (2002) (*Essay with Illustrations*).
[191] See here Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Publick Benefits,* (2 vols.) (ed. F.B. Kaye) Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, 1988, Vol 2(*Fable Part II*),
[192] See Joseph Butler, *Fifteen Sermons Preached at The Rolls Chapel*, (ed. T.A. Roberts), Society for the Production of Christian Knowledge, (1970).

Malebranche.[193] And we get a sense (more or less, depending on how charitable one wants to be) for Hume's understanding of how the experimental method of reasoning could be used to unearth obscure principles of human nature (see T 2.2.2, SBN 332-47). Although, by the same measure, we get little sense of there being a determinate direction to Hume's reasoning across his account of love and hatred; such that it is hard to say whether there is any guiding design behind his treatment of these passions, other than the desire to systematise human behaviour as thoroughly as possible; and this does not tell us much, as this desire was common to both experimental and speculative philosophers alike.

In what follows I attempt to extract an overall aim from Hume's account of love and hatred. To do so I will focus on three difficulties that Hume highlights for his system of these passions. My basic thesis is that there is some reason why Hume identifies the difficulties that he does, and provides the solutions that he provides, and that this reason is connected to a larger design for his account of love and hatred. In particular, I argue that Hume's account of love and hatred, on the whole, is an attack on the ancient belief that human beings are essentially superior to animals. Most precisely, I contend that Hume actively resists Francis Hutcheson's attempt to ground this ancient belief experimentally, by positing a number of innate perceptual faculties, or 'internal senses', that mark essential differences between man and animals, and that serve to explain why moral other-regarding affections are unique to human beings.[194]

[193] On this point see Elenore Le Jallé, 'Hume, Malebranche, and the Self-Justification of the Passions', *Hume Studies* 38 (2012) pp. 201-220.

[194] Taylor (2015) and Gill (2006) have recently argued that Hume's account of love and hatred aims to discredit Hutcheson's moral sense theory; see here, Jacqueline Taylor, *Reflecting Subjects: Passion, Sympathy, and Society in Hume's Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2015

I begin by setting out what Hume calls his 'system' of love and hatred (section 2). Then, with an understanding of Hume's system of these passions in place, I examine the three different 'difficulties' that Hume identifies for his system, and I show that Hume's solutions to each of these difficulties all employ the same explanatory procedure (section 3). Having shown this, I then ask why Hume chose to highlight the particular difficulties that he did, and to resolve them all in the same manner. Here I argue that Hume's choice of difficulties suggests that he was targeting Hutcheson's attempt to explain analogous expressions of love and hatred by appealing to an innate moral sense (section 4).

I then argue that Hume targets Hutcheson's moral sense theory because Hutcheson's moral sense theory posits an essential difference between human and animal natures – such that Hutcheson accounts for Hume's difficult to explain expressions of love and hatred by positing principles that are observed no-where other than in human nature. By contrast, Hume's account of love and hatred explains the same expressions of love and hatred using principles that are observed to be common to all of sensitive creation (section 5). I then conclude by contending that while the difficulties that Hume identifies for his system of love and hatred target Hutcheson's moral sense theory, Hume's explanations of the similarly difficult passions of pity, envy and malice target Hutcheson's contention that our non-moral, other-regarding passions are products of an innate 'public'

(*Reflecting Subjects*), pp. 1-31; see also Michael B. Gill, *The British Moralists on Human Nature and the Birth of Secular Ethics.* Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 217-8. I broadly agree. Where I differ, however, is that I see Hume as primarily targeting Hutcheson's belief in mankind's essential superiority to animals, rather than, as both Taylor and Gill contend, the theological implications of Hutcheson's moral sense theory.

sense, the possession of which marks a further essential difference between mankind and animals (section 6). In light of this, I claim that Hume's account of love and hatred, on the whole, is motivated by a desire to eradicate the ancient belief in humanity's essential superiority over animals from experimental moral science.

2. Hume's 'System' of Love and Hatred

Hume says that the passions of love and hatred need no introduction, as they are 'sufficiently known from our common feeling and experience' (T 2.2.1.1, SBN 329). Yet, given that Hume's aim is to systematise common feeling and experience into a regular science of human nature, he nevertheless proceeds to describe, in his own terminology, what we might already have known love and hatred to be. Namely, love is a pleasant impression, while hatred is a painful one; and it is characteristic of both these passions that they direct the mind's attention to the idea of 'some other person, of whose thoughts, actions, and sensations we are not conscious' (T 2.2.1.2-3, SBN 329-30). In this way, Hume points out, love and hatred are other-regarding analogues of pride and humility, or those pleasant and painful impressions that direct the mind's attention to the idea of 'self or that identical person, of whose thoughts, actions, and sensations we are intimately conscious' (T 2.1.5.3, SBN 286).[195]

[195] Hume will later point out an important dis-analogy between love and hatred and pride and humility. This is that 'pride and humility are pure emotions in the soul, unattended with any desire, and not immediately exciting us to action. But love and hatred are not completed within themselves, nor rest in that emotion, which they produce, but carry the mind to something farther', namely, 'love and hatred are always followed by, or rather conjoin'd with benevolence and anger' (T 2.2.6.3, SBN 367). It is noteworthy that Hume explicitly rejects the notion that this is because love and hatred not only have other people as their '*object*', but also have those

The causes of love and hatred, Hume notes, are 'very much diversify'd, and have not many things in common' (T 2.2.1.4, SBN 330). For if we consider those things that tend to produce these two passions we find that love arises from a person's 'virtue, knowledge, wit, [and] good sense', as well as from their 'bodily accomplishments' and 'external advantages', while hatred arises from 'the opposite qualities', whether they be mental deformities, physical disabilities, or external disadvantages (T 2.2.1.4, SBN 330). This said, however, the causes of love and hatred are not without any common features. And what they do have in common, Hume suggests, is that '*the cause of both these passions is always related to a thinking being*, and *that the cause of the former produce a separate pleasure, and of the latter a separate uneasiness*' (T 2.2.1.6, SBN 331). This is to say, in other words, that the causes of love and hatred always produce pleasures and pains that are distinct from the pleasant and painful sensations of these passions themselves, and that such causes are always related to a 'thinking being' other than oneself.[196]

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persons' happiness and misery (respectively) as their '*end*' (T 2.2.6.4, SBN 367). Instead it is Hume's opinion that love is conjoined with benevolence, and hatred with anger 'by the original constitution of the mind' (T 2.2.6.6, SBN 368). That Hume should think this is consistent with my claim that he was actively resisting Hutcheson's attempt to explain the nature of love and hatred by appealing to mankind's possession of an innate moral sense. Still, it is my opinion that the bulk of Hume's critique of Hutcheson's moral sense theory occurs across *Treatise* 2.2.1-5, and that in the greater scheme of Book Two Part Two, the chief function of section 2.2.6 is to provide Hume with a means of discussing the passions of pity and malice within his general 'double relation' theory of love and hatred. Hume's discussion of pity and malice, while very interesting, is also very convoluted, and I am only interested in it here insofar as we might see Hume's account of pity and malice (and envy) as targeting Hutcheson's appeal to an innate 'public sense', in much the same way as Hume's account of love and hatred can be seen to target Hutcheson's appeal to an innate moral sense (for more on this see the conclusion to this chapter (section 6)).

[196] It is clear that when Hume says the causes of love and hatred are 'always related to a thinking being' that he means a thinking being *other than oneself*, for otherwise the causes in question would produce pride and humility. Relatedly, Hume at one point specifies that a 'person' is 'always' the object of love and hatred (T 2.2.1.3, SBN 330), but he also suggests that we love animals and that animals love us from the same principles as those by which we love other

With these observations in place, Hume proceeds to perform a number of 'experiments' upon love and hatred, as well as pride and humility, so as to establish 'beyond doubt' what he calls his 'system' of these four passions (T 2.2.2, SBN 332-47). More precisely, Hume's aim is to show that the production of love and hatred, and pride and humility, necessarily involves both (1) an association of ideas between the cause of the passion and the object of the passion (i.e. a transition of ideas via one or more of Hume's three associative relations of ideas: resemblance, contiguity, and causation), and (2) an association of impressions between the cause of the passion and the sensation of the passion itself (i.e. a transition of impressions via Hume's single associative relation of impressions: resemblance).[197] Or, as Hume also puts it:

> that nothing can produce any of these passions without bearing it a double relation, *viz*. of ideas to the object of the passion, and of sensation to the passion itself.
>
> (T 2.2.2.4, SBN 333)

For instance, Hume hopes to show that our love for a virtuous person proceeds from, on the one hand, the relations of ideas between our idea of their person, qua virtuous agent, and our idea of their person, qua object of love, and, on the other, the resemblance between the pleasant sensations caused by their virtuous qualities and the pleasant sensation of love itself (see T 2.2.2.9, SBN 336-7).

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persons (T 2.2.12, SBN 397-8). He simply is not very precise on such points, although his underlying picture is clear enough – we feel love and hatred towards other 'thinking beings', animals included, and pride and humility in our own self (although see here T 2.2.8.10-11, SBN 376-7).

[197] For a useful overview of these relations see T 2.1.4, SBN 282-4, '*Of the relations of impressions and ideas*'.

Should Hume find this to be the case, then he can say that our love for virtuous people is caused by 'the transition along related impressions and ideas' (T 2.2.2.1, SBN 332) that naturally occurs whenever both (1) and (2) obtain.

Hume produces eight experiments in defence of this general explanatory principle. The first four of these experiments (T 2.2.2.5-9, SBN 333-7) are relatively uninteresting and merely extend what Hume had already established in the case of pride and humility to the passions of love and hatred; namely that, according to his theory of associative relations, 'whatever has a double relation [to pride, humility, love, or hatred] must necessarily excite these passions' (T 2.2.2.9, SBN 336), and that, conversely, when there is no such 'double relation' then these passions do not arise. In contrast, Hume's last four experiments are interesting, as here Hume attempts to establish a new result, and one that will prove especially important to his account of love and hatred. Namely, Hume attempts to show that variations in the expression of pride, humility, love and hatred arise from circumstances that are external to, yet impact upon, the associative relations of impressions and ideas that produce these passions: such that if 'by any particular circumstance [a relation of either impressions or ideas] ceases to produce its usual effect' then it 'ceases likewise to operate on the passions' (T 2.2.2.25, SBN 345); and conversely, that if for some particular reason a relation of either impressions or ideas has a *greater* than usual effect, then its operation upon the passions is greater.

Hume achieves this result by first constructing a number of anomalous situations in which both (1) and (2) obtain, and yet the passions that they ought to produce

do not arise, or arise to a lesser degree than might be expected. Then, having created such situations, Hume proceeds to show that these anomalies occur because, for some reason, the usual operation of either (1) or (2) is obstructed by some other competing principle of the mind. This being the case, Hume is able to establish that our feelings of pride, humility, love and hatred are liable to variations in their expression that are caused by principles other than the 'double relation' from which they arise.

For example: Hume observes in his fifth experiment that the love and hatred we feel towards our relatives and friends on account of their virtuous and vicious qualities do not conclude with our reflecting kindly, or unkindly, on their person. Instead, Hume claims, our love and hatred for such people naturally transitions into pride and humility in our own person on account of (1) the relations of ideas between such persons and ourselves, and (2) the relation of impressions between love and pride, and hatred and humility. Indeed Hume somewhat hyperbolically asserts that '[n]othing causes us greater vanity than any shining quality in our relations; as nothing mortifies us more than their vice or infamy' (T 2.2.2.13, SBN 338).

So far, so good. Yet problems arise, Hume notes, 'if we reverse the experiment, and preserving still the same relations, begin only with a different passion' (T 2.2.2.14, SBN 338). More precisely, Hume asks his readers to:

> Suppose, that instead of the virtue or vice of a son or brother, which causes first love or hatred, and afterward pride or humility, we place these good qualities on ourselves

> … Experience shews us, that by this change of situation the whole chain is broke, and that the mind is not convey'd from one passion to another, as in the preceding instance. We never love or hate a son or brother for the virtue or vice we discern in ourselves; tho' 'tis evident the same qualities in him give us a very sensible pride or humility … This may at first sight be esteem'd contrary to my hypothesis; since the relations of impressions and ideas in both cases are precisely the same. Pride and humility are impressions related to love and hatred. Myself am related to the person. It shou'd therefore, be expected, that like causes must produce like effects, and a perfect transition arise from the double relation, as in all other cases.
>
> (T 2.2.2.14, SBN 338-9)

The situation that Hume describes here is indeed 'contrary' to his 'double relation' hypothesis. Yet, as he proceeds to point out, there are further principles in play that serve to explain why we do not, in general, feel love or hatred for others on account of the pride and humility we take in ourselves.

Hume notes that, generally speaking, '[t]he imagination passes easily from obscure to lively ideas, but with difficulty from lively to obscure' (T 2.2.2.15, SBN 339). Not only this, but ''[t]is evident, that as we are at all times intimately conscious of ourselves, our sentiments and passions, their ideas must strike upon us with greater vivacity than the ideas of the sentiments and passions of any other person' (T 2.2.2.15, SBN 339). This being the case, however, we ought to find that the imagination passes easily from our ideas of other people to our idea of our self, but with difficulty from our idea of our self to ideas of other people. Indeed, Hume contends that this is precisely what we do find, and that:

> [t]his is the reason why pride or humility is not transfused into love or hatred with the same ease, that the latter passions are chang'd into the former. If a person be my brother I am his likewise: But tho' the relations be reciprocal, they have very different effects on the imagination.
>
> (T 2.2.2.16, SBN 340)

In particular, while the imagination 'facilitates' the transition from one's ideas of one's siblings to one's idea of oneself, it 'retards' the transition from one's idea of one's self to ideas of one's siblings (T 2.2.2.16, SBN 340). This being the case, we find,

> that even when the relation remains [in this case, the sibling relation]; if by any particular circumstance its usual effect upon the fancy in producing an association or transition of ideas, is prevented; its usual effect upon the passions, in conveying us from one to the other, is in like manner prevented.
>
> (T 2.2.2.16, SBN 340)

Likewise, if by any particular circumstance the usual effect of a relation of ideas is enhanced, then its usual effect in producing passions is also enhanced. It is for this reason, Hume further contends, that we *do* tend to love those persons whose approbation and disapprobation are the immediate cause of our pride and humility. For,

> the transition in this case is not made merely on account of the relation betwixt ourselves and the person; but because that very person is the real cause of our first

> passion, and of consequence is intimately connected with it. 'Tis his approbation that produces pride; and disapprobation humility.
>
> (T 2.2.2.27, SBN 346)

As such, Hume says, it is '[n]o wonder … [that] the imagination returns back again attended with the related passions of love and hatred. This is not a contradiction, but an exception to the rule; and an exception that arises from the same reason with the rule itself' (T 2.2.2.27, SBN 346).

These examples go to show, Hume thinks, that our expressions of love and hatred, as well as of pride and humility, are open to influence from general principles of the imagination. Alongside these examples, Hume gives others to demonstrate that general principles of the passions have a similar influence (T 2.2.2.18-26, SBN 341-6). In particular, Hume asserts that, as a general rule, our passions have difficulty transitioning from small degrees of passion to great degrees of passion, and vice versa, without any intermediate steps (T 2.2.2.20, SBN 342). As such, Hume says, our love of a person rarely ever transitions into a love for their superiors (that is, those persons who are 'greater' than them – e.g. their masters or parents) even though the imagination naturally runs from ideas of inferiors to ideas of superiors and ought to take our love with it (T 2.2.2.22-7, SBN 343-6). In this case, Hume says, a general principle of the passions serves to counteract this natural tendency of the imagination, and thus to 'retard' the expression of love.[198]

[198] The converse is true, Hume thinks, as regards our love for a person's inferiors on account of our love for that person themselves. This example gets quite complicated (read: convoluted),

All in all, then, Hume's 'system' of love and hatred is that these two passions, like pride and humility, arise from a double relation of impressions and ideas, but that this 'double relation', insofar as it consists in a conjunction of principles of the imagination and of the passions, is itself liable to influence from other principles of the mind, both of the imagination and of the passions. As such, we ultimately find that expressions of love and hatred, as well as of pride and humility, are subject to a number of different variations that result from the interaction of the passions and the imagination, considered as distinct faculties. Indeed, Hume regards such variations as further instances of the general connection between the passions and imagination through which he had first supposed 'double' relations of impressions and ideas to exercise an influence upon the mind – and thus as further confirmation of his double relation hypothesis.

3. Three Difficulties

Having set out and defended his 'system' of love and hatred, as well as pride and humility, Hume says that 'it may seem superfluous to enter into a particular examination of all the causes of love and hatred' (T 2.2.3.1, SBN 347). This said, Hume nevertheless proceeds to examine three different 'particular causes of these passions' with the aim of 'removing some difficulties' that these 'particular causes' pose for his 'double relation' theory (T 2.2.3.1, SBN 347). Hume both

but its underlying principle is the same. For a detailed discussion of this example see Taylor, *Reflecting Subjects*, pp. 25-9.

presents and resolves each of these difficulties separately. This happens across the sections '*Difficulties solv'd*' (T 2.2.3), '*Of the love of relations*' (T 2.2.4), and '*Of our esteem for the rich and powerful*' (T 2.2.5). However, in the interests of observing what is common amongst Hume's solutions to each of his three difficulties, it will be useful to set out the difficulties first, before turning to examine their solutions.

(I) The first of Hume's difficulties concerns the love and hatred that we feel towards others on account of their intentions. Here Hume points out that '[a] man, who wounds and harms us by accident, becomes not our enemy upon that account, nor do we think ourselves bound by any ties of gratitude to one, who does us any service after the same manner' (T 2.2.3.3, SBN 348). On the other hand, he observes that:

> [t]he principal part of an injury is the contempt and hatred, which it shews in the person, that injures us … [i]n like manner, a good office is agreeable, chiefly because it flatters our vanity, and is a proof of the kindness and esteem of the person, who performs it.
>
> (T 2.2.3.5, SBN 349)

So far as this is the case, Hume suggests, it would seem that he ought to 'add another condition' to his theory of love and hatred – as he says 'some' philosophers do – and 'require not only that the pain and pleasure [that cause hatred and love] arise from the person, but likewise that it arise knowingly, and with a particular design and intention' (T 2.2.3.3, SBN 348).

(II) Hume's second difficulty concerns the love that we feel towards those with some connection to ourselves, such as our relatives and friends. This time, however, Hume's problem is that we 'always' love such people without any regard for their peculiar personal qualities, whether pleasant or painful, or as Hume puts it,

> [w]hoever is united to us by any connexion is always sure of a share of our love, proportion'd to the connexion, without enquiring into his other qualities. Thus the relation of blood produces the strongest ties the mind is capable of in the love of parents to their children, and a lesser degree of the same affection, as the relation lessens.
>
> (T 2.2.4.2, SBN 352)

And likewise,

> [w]hen we have contracted a habitude and intimacy with any person; tho' in frequenting his company we have not been able to discover any very valuable quality, of which he is possess'd; yet we cannot forebear preferring him to strangers, of whose superior merit we are fully convinc'd.
>
> (T 2.2.4.3, SBN 352)

In the latter case the difficulty that Hume identifies is especially stark. For according to his double relation theory, we ought always to prefer persons 'of whose superior merit we are fully convinc'd' to those of no discernable merit: as the superiority of their merit ought to produce a superior quantity of pleasure in

our idea of their person, and thus a superior quantity of love towards them. As such, insofar as we 'cannot forebear' feeling greater love for acquaintances of no discernable merit than we do towards strangers of known superior merit, then we have reason to think that there is a further source of love towards those persons who have some 'connexion' to ourselves; one that is distinct from the love that arises from a recognition of others' pleasing personal qualities.

(III) Hume's third and final difficulty concerns our esteem for the rich and powerful. In contrast to his first two difficulties, Hume's third difficulty does not involve a potential exception to his double relation theory of our other-regarding passions. Rather, Hume's problem with discerning the cause of our esteem for the rich and powerful (and concomitantly, of our contempt for 'poverty and meanness' (T 2.2.5.1, SBN 357)) is the 'most fortunate' one of deciding upon the 'chief and predominant' principle that causes such esteem, 'among several, that present themselves' (T 2.2.5.2, SBN 357). In particular, Hume must decide whether it is (a) the pleasurable objects that the rich and powerful possess that cause us to esteem them; or (b) the expectation that the rich and powerful will confer pleasing benefits upon us; or (c) our sympathy with the pleasure that the rich and powerful take in their riches and power (T 2.2.5.2, SBN 357-8). Hume eventually settles upon (c) which is not surprising given the importance of sympathy to his overall philosophy of human nature. More surprising, rather, is that Hume should single out this last 'difficulty' as being worth the effort of removing.

Indeed it is worth asking why Hume decides to single out each of the particular difficulties that he does. For it is notable that, taken individually, none of the three difficulties that Hume draws attention to shares any obvious connection to the other two. As such, however tempting it is to think that there was some design behind Hume's choice to address these difficulties explicitly and consecutively, it is by no means obvious just what Hume's design was. I will return to this question in the next section. Yet, before doing so, it will be helpful to examine how Hume resolves each of the difficulties that he identifies for his 'double relation' hypothesis regarding the causes of love and hatred.

For when we turn to Hume's solutions to his difficulties, what we find is that each of Hume's solutions leverage his previous demonstration that expressions of love and hatred are influenced by principles other than the 'double relation' of impressions and ideas from which they arise. For instance, concerning (I), or our love and hatred towards others according to their intentions, Hume says that an agent's intentions serve to 'facilitate the transition of ideas' between their actions and their character insofar as intentional actions are perceived to 'be deriv'd from a particular fore-thought and design' (T 2.2.3.4, SBN 349). It is because of this enhanced transition of ideas, Hume contends, that intentional harms and benefits produce sustained feelings of hatred and love towards those who cause them, while unintentional harms and benefits produce only fleeting, if any, feelings of hatred and love. In light of this, Hume concludes that considerations of an agent's good and bad intentions produce love and hatred only insofar as they serve to 'connect [an] action sufficiently with a person', but that otherwise, '[i]f that quality in another, that pleases or displeases, be

constant and inherent in his person and character, it will cause love or hatred independent of the intention' (T 2.2.3.4, SBN 348-9).

The situation is similar as regards (II), or the love that we feel towards those with some connection to us, without regard for their peculiar personal qualities. Here Hume observes that, in general, 'the mind' is,

> insufficient, of itself, to its own entertainment, and that it naturally seeks after foreign objects, which may produce a lively sensation, and agitate the spirits.
>
> (T 2.2.4.4, SBN 352-3)

Of all such objects, Hume says, the most entertaining is:

> a rational and thinking Being like ourselves, who communicates to us all the actions of his mind; makes us privy to his innermost sentiments and affections; and lets us see, in the very instant of their production, all the emotions, which are caus'd by any object.
>
> (T 2.2.4.4, SBN 353)

Once we come to see this, Hume thinks, 'all the rest is easy':

> For as the company of strangers is agreeable to us for *a short time*, by inlivening our thought; so the company of our relations and acquaintance must be peculiarly agreeable, because it has this effect in a greater degree, and is of more *durable* influence.
>
> (T 2.2.4.5, SBN 353)

This is to say, in other words, that we receive enduring entertainment from our acquaintances and relatives, because these are the 'rational and thinking beings' with which we form the strongest relations. By contrast, we receive less substantial entertainment from strangers because we only form associations with strangers for a short time, if at all. As such, Hume concludes, we naturally tend to love our acquaintances more than those with whom we are unacquainted, even when we perceive such strangers to be of superior merit to our acquaintances. And we tend to love our friends and blood relatives above acquaintances, despite being intimately aware of their foibles.

As regards (III), or our esteem for the rich and powerful, the situation is slightly different. For, as previously noted, Hume's difficulty in this instance is to choose between a number of competing conceptions of the pleasure caused by the rich and powerful ((a), (b), or (c) above) that could each, of itself, explain why we come to feel esteem for those with riches and power, according to his double relation hypothesis. This said, however, Hume's solution to this 'most fortunate' of difficulties is to discern which of our ideas of the pleasures of riches and power 'are favour'd by most circumstances, and have a natural tendency to become strong and lively' and by this means acquire an 'advantage … in operating on the imagination' (T 2.2.5.4, SBN 359). Here Hume argues that it is (c), or our pleasing sympathy with the rich and powerful, that operates most forcefully upon the imagination, and thus that it is our sympathy with the rich

and powerful that best explains our esteem for them.[199] This being the case, however, what we ultimately find is that Hume's solution to (III) is fundamentally the same as his solutions to (I) and (II). Namely, that they all involve appeals to extra principles of the mind, alongside the 'double relation' of impressions and ideas that produces love and hatred, and that these principles serve to enhance the expression of these passions.

4. Hutcheson on Hume's Three Difficulties

We can now return to examine Hume's choice of difficulties. As noted above, Hume's three difficulties do not have any obvious commonalities, so why did he choose to single out (I), (II), and (III) and to give similar solutions to each of them? A straightforward answer here is that having come to realise the difficulties presented by (I), (II), and (III), Hume desired to head-off these difficulties as potential objections. However, even if this was part of Hume's motivation, it does not explain why his solutions all follow the same pattern. Still, supposing that Hume's solutions to (I), (II), and (III) do serve as pre-emptive responses to foreseeable objections, then we can look to the potential sources of such objections so as to get a sense for Hume's larger designs.

We can follow this line of thought by turning to the writings of Francis Hutcheson. There are two reasons for this. The first is that while many of Hume's

[199] In fact, Hume argues that the 'chief reason' that we esteem the rich and powerful is not our immediate sympathy with the pleasure that the rich and powerful take in their riches and power themselves, but in a secondary (or 'reflected') sympathy with the pleasure that the rich and powerful take in others' admiration of their riches and power (i.e. the 'vanity' that the rich and powerful take in their riches and power). See T 2.2.5.16, SBN 363-4.

contemporaries had developed accounts of our other-regarding passions, it was Hutcheson who had developed the most detailed theory of such passions, and thus it is against Hutcheson's theory of love and hatred that Hume's theory is most fruitfully read. The second is that Hutcheson had drawn an especially strong connection between (I) our love and hatred towards agents whom we perceive to act with good and bad intentions, (II) the love we feel towards our personal connections, and (III) our esteem for the rich and powerful. Namely, he had argued that a moral sense of good and evil plays an essential role in the production of all of them.

To see this we can begin with Hutcheson's general definition of love and hatred, before turning to examine his analogues of (I), (II), and (III). When we do so we find that, for Hutcheson, the names 'Love' and 'Hatred' are most properly 'confined' to what he calls 'our Sentiments toward Moral Agents'[200]; with:

> *Love* denoting *Desire* of the Happiness of another, generally attended with some *Approbation* of him as innocent at least, or being of a mixed Character, where Good is generally prevalent: And *Hatred* denoting Disapprobation by our *Sense*, with the Absence of Desire of their Happiness.[201]

Of particular note here is that Hutcheson defines love as the desire for the happiness of another that is 'generally attended' with 'approbation', while hatred is defined as the 'disapprobation' of a person and an 'absence' of any desire of their happiness. It is somewhat odd that Hutcheson should define love as a

[200] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 52.
[201] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 52.

desire attended with an approving moral sensation and hatred as a disapproving moral sensation with the absence of desire. Less awkward, surely, would have been to define love as the desire of another's happiness attended with an approving sensation towards them, and hatred as an aversion to another's happiness attended with a disapproving sensation.

Yet Hutcheson's awkward definition of love and hatred becomes more readily comprehensible if it is read against an earlier account of these sentiments that he had given in his *Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725). There Hutcheson had divided both love and hatred into two components, where:

> Love toward rational Agents, is subdivided into Love of Complacence or Esteem, and Love of Benevolence: And Hatred is subdivided into Hatred of Displicence or Contempt, and Hatred of Malice.[202]

Importantly here, while Hutcheson conceives of both love and hatred having two components, he does not regard these components as having the same cause. In particular, while Hutcheson held that the 'Love of Complacence' and 'Hatred of Displicence' were 'entirely excited by some moral Qualitys, Good or Evil, apprehended to be in the Objects'[203], he believed that the 'Love of Benevolence' and the 'Hatred of Malice' arose from instincts that were independent of our moral sense.

[202] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 102.
[203] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, pp. 102-3.

More precisely, Hutcheson understood the 'love of benevolence' to arise from a 'disinterested' or 'generous' instinct to desire the happiness of all other rational agents, while he understood the 'hatred of malice' to arise from an 'interested' or 'selfish' instinct to desire the misery of those whom we perceive to have harmed our own interests (either personally, or as members of the human species).[204] Hutcheson understood these instincts to be innate to humankind and thus to arise from 'the very Frame of our Nature'[205], rather than from the perception of a person's moral qualities. This said, however, Hutcheson believed that these instincts are 'always' observed to arise alongside 'love of complacence' and 'hatred of displicence' unless contingent circumstances intervene to cancel them out.[206] Thus both love and hatred are to be regarded as complex sentiments towards others that consist of both moral sensations of approval and disapproval, and affections towards their happiness or misery.

With this background in place it becomes clear why Hutcheson should later define love as a desire for the happiness of another that is 'generally attended' with 'approbation'. For, to Hutcheson's mind, to love another person – strictly speaking – is to experience an innate benevolence towards them together with sensations of moral approval for their good moral qualities. Likewise, it becomes clearer why Hutcheson defines hatred as a sensation of moral disapproval along with the *absence* of benevolence. For insofar as hatred can be 'subdivided' into

[204] See Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, pp. 103-5. Notably, Hutcheson takes great pains to deny that the 'hatred of malice' is ever *dis*interested, at least not insofar as it arises naturally in human beings. Instead, while '[a] sudden Passion may give us wrong Representations of our Fellow-Creatures, and for a little time represent them as absolutely Evil; and during this Imagination perhaps we may give some Evidences of disinterested Malice … as soon as we reflect upon human Nature, and form just Conceptions, this unnatural Passion is allay'd' (*Inquiry*, p. 105).
[205] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 104.
[206] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, pp. 104-5.

'contempt' and 'malice' then hatred consists of a sensation moral disapproval (contempt) and a desire of an agent's misery (malice). The effect of this desire, however, is to counteract our innate benevolence towards all rational agents; which leaves us with a sensation of moral disapproval towards those whom we hate, together with an absence of benevolent affections towards them.

(I*) We can now turn to Hutcheson's analogues of (I), (II), and (III). And what we find here, most notably, is that Hutcheson believes that an agent's intentions are essential to our coming to feel love and hatred towards them. This follows immediately from Hutcheson's conception of love and hatred together with his definition of moral good and evil. More precisely, while Hutcheson defines natural good and evil as pleasure and pain, respectively,[207] he contends that:

> [a]n Action is good, in a moral Sense, when it flows from benevolent Affection, or Intention of absolute Good to others.[208]

This is to say, in other words, that we perceive actions as morally pleasing when we perceive the agent responsible for them to have intended the good of others, as an end in itself, such that these actions could be said to 'flow' from a benevolent affection, via the agent's intentions.[209]

The case is the same with moral evil, although the situation is a little more convoluted. For, in this case:

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[207] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 34.
[208] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 36.
[209] Conversely, Hutcheson holds that we find 'exceedingly useful' actions to be 'void of moral beauty, if we know they proceeded from no kind intentions': Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 116.

> [a]n Action is morally evil, either from Intention of absolute Evil, universal, or particular, (which is seldom the case with Men, except in sudden Passions;) or from pursuit of private or particular relative Good, which they might have known did tend to universal absolute Evil. For even the want of a just Degree of Benevolence renders an Action evil.[210]

Here an action is morally painful either when it 'flows' from malicious passions, or from selfish affections that the agent ought to have known were contrary to benevolence. For in both cases the intentions involved lack benevolence, either absolutely, or partially.[211]

When these definitions of moral good and evil are read into Hutcheson's definitions of love and hatred, they entail that an agent's good and bad intentions towards others give rise to love and hatred towards them. Indeed, these definitions of moral good and evil entail that our beliefs about agents' intentions are the sole cause of our love or hatred towards them, at least in the strict sense of these terms.

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[210] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 36.

[211] It is sometimes suggested that, for Hutcheson, the 'objects of moral evaluation are the affections of rational agents, insofar as they produce intentional actions' (Amy M. Schmitter, '17th and 18th Century Theories of Emotions', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition) (ed. Edward N. Zalta), URL: plato,stanford.edu/entries/emotions-17th18th - accessed 6 Jan 2020). In actual fact, however, Hutcheson believes that agents' *intentions* are the objects of moral evaluation, insofar as intentions serve to causally connect affections and actions (they establish a 'flow' between them, to use Hutcheson's favourite term). As it happens, the affections from which an agent acts are morally irrelevant. It is of no moral importance to Hutcheson whether we care for someone out of pity, or friendship, as long as our intention in doing so is benevolent. Indeed, according to Hutcheson's definition of moral evil, if we act out of pity or friendship when we ought to have known that doing so was contrary to benevolence then our actions are evil, because our intention lacks 'a just degree of benevolence', not because pity or friendship are evil. To be fair, Hutcheson often speaks of our approving and disapproving actions, affections, tempers, and characters (see here, *Inquiry*, p. 10). But his definitions of moral good and evil make it clear that our approval and disapproval of such things is derivative upon our approval and disapproval of intentions.

(II*) Alongside the general theory of love and hatred that Hutcheson develops across all his writings, he also attempts to account for a number of specific expressions of love, notably in Section V of the *Inquiry*. Of particular importance to Hutcheson is the affection that he calls 'Gratitude, or when Benevolence is increas'd by greater Love of Esteem'[212]. Indeed, Hutcheson believed that 'nothing will give us a juster Idea of the wise Order in which human Nature is form'd for universal Love, and mutual good Offices, than considering that strong attraction of Benevolence, which we call Gratitude'[213].

More precisely, Hutcheson believed that while 'there is a universal Determination to Benevolence in Mankind, even toward the most distant parts of the Species'[214],

> we are not to imagine that this Benevolence is equal, or in the same degree toward all. There are some nearer and stronger Degrees of Benevolence, when the Objects stand in some nearer relations to our selves.[215]

For example:

> Every one knows that Beneficence toward our selves makes a much deeper Impression upon us, and raises Gratitude, or a stronger Love toward the Benefactor, than equal Beneficence toward a third Person.[216]

[212] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 148.
[213] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 149.
[214] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 148.
[215] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 148.

Prima facie, however, such expressions of gratitude present a problem for Hutcheson's general account of love. For we ought to apportion our love towards others according to their merit, rather than preferring those who have conferred some benefit upon us. This being the case, it can seem as if our gratitude towards our benefactors arises from the self-interested pleasure we take in their beneficence, rather than from a perception of their moral goodness, and thus that – strictly speaking – gratitude is not an expression of love at all, but has a selfish origin.[217]

Yet this is not the case, at least not to Hutcheson's thinking. Rather, Hutcheson contends that since no one is able to be 'remarkably useful to vast multitudes'[218] it would be 'useless' for our instinct to universal benevolence to be 'equally extended to Multitudes at vast distances, whose Interest we could not understand, nor be capable of promoting, having no Intercourse of Offices with them'[219]. This being the case, we find that:

> Nature has more powerfully determin'd us to admire, and love the moral Qualitys of others which affect our selves, and has given us more powerful Impressions of Good-will toward those who are beneficent to ourselves.[220]

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[216] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 149.
[217] See Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 107.
[218] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 149.
[219] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 150.
[220] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 150.

Or, in other words, that nature has fitted us with an innate moral sense that biases our universal benevolence towards persons whom we have 'Intercourse' with, as these are the people whose interests we are best placed to promote. In this way, Hutcheson thinks, our 'universal benevolence towards all men' can be compared to,

> that Principle of Gravitation, which perhaps extends to all Bodys in the Universe; but, like the Love of Benevolence, increases as the Distance is diminish'd, and is strongest when Bodys come to touch each other.[221]

Indeed, Hutcheson thinks that the biasing of our universal benevolence by our moral sense is not only apparent 'in all the strong Ties of Friendship, Acquaintance, Neighbourhood, [and] Partnership' [222], where another's beneficence towards us is obvious, but also in 'common Friendships and Acquaintances', in which 'an incredible variety of little agreeable, engaging Evidences of Love, Good-nature, and other morally amiable Qualitys' lead us to enjoy the 'society' of others, without their performing any specific acts of beneficence towards us.[223]

(III*) Another specific expression of love that Hutcheson attempts to account for is 'honour', or our love of the wealthy and powerful.[224] In this instance, however, Hutcheson's aim is not to demonstrate the wise order of this arrangement (at

[221] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 150.
[222] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 150.
[223] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 172.
[224] Hutcheson does not explicitly define honour as the love of the wealthy and powerful. This said, he describes 'Wealth and Power' as 'the great Engines of Virtue', and the wealthy and powerful are his chief examples of honourable people (see *Inquiry*, pp. 151-60).

least not directly), but to refute the claim that a self-interested desire of honour is the natural foundation of publically beneficial actions, rather than an innate benevolence. In particular, Hutcheson is concerned to refute Mandeville's infamous contention that 'Virtue' (as Hutcheson paraphrases him) 'is the Offspring of Flattery, begot upon Pride'[225], or that a selfish desire for the pleasures of others' esteem is what drives people to perform publicly useful actions, such that what we call "virtue" is really selfishness in disguise.

To this end, Hutcheson acknowledges that while the desire of honour is natural, and is indeed selfish, the object of honour is the moral approbation, by others, of one's benevolence.[226] This being the case, it turns out that both an innate disposition towards benevolence, as well as an innate moral sense of goodness in benevolent actions are the foundation of our desire of honour; rather than the desire of honour being the foundation of our ideas of moral goodness and of benevolent actions.[227] It is for this reason, Hutcheson thinks, that 'Misers are asham'd of their Wealth, and study to conceal it; as the malicious or selfish do their Power'[228]: i.e. because they fear being dishonoured for not using their wealth and power to benevolent ends. By the same measure, Hutcheson asserts, no-one is ever ashamed to pursue 'Objects of unexhausted universal Pleasure'[229], e.g. artworks and knowledge, as this use of one's wealth and power always tends

[225] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 154.
[226] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, pp. 152-3.
[227] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, pp. 152-160.
[228] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 157.
[229] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 160.

to the public good, even if one pursues such objects for entirely selfish reasons.[230]

All in all, then, what we find is that Hutcheson posits an innate moral sense as the cause, at least in part, of love and hatred (I*), generosity (II*), and of honour (III*). This is not surprising in the context of Hutcheson's philosophy. Indeed Hutcheson saw himself as providing experimental arguments *for* the existence of just such a sense. Yet it is still interesting in the context of Hume's identification of the closely analogous passions (I), (II), (III) as three expressions of love and hatred that pose particular problems for his own double relation theory. For one thing, it means that each of Hume's difficulties already had a single elegant solution in the supposition of an innate moral sense. Moreover, they had a solution with experimental bona fides. Thus, insofar as Hume identifies (I), (II), and (III) as difficulties that require solutions, and then provides solutions to these difficulties without appealing to a moral sense, then we can say that Hume is resisting Hutcheson's supposition of an innate moral sense to explain (I*), (II*) and (III*).[231]

[230] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, pp. 159-60.

[231] It is worth mentioning here that Hume himself speaks of a 'moral sense' as the source of moral distinctions (see here T 3.1.2; SBN 470; T 3.3.1.25, SBN 588), and even leaves room for the possibility that animals have some 'sense of virtue or vice' (although only 'little', if that) (T 2.1.12.5, SBN 326). While such mentions are hardly enough to commit Hume to a moral sense theory, it would seem that he was comfortable with following Hutcheson in speaking of moral perceptions as arising from a discrete moral sense. What Hume objected to in Hutcheson's supposition of a moral sense – I argue below – was Hutcheson's contention that such a sense was an innate property of human nature that marked an essential difference between human beings and animals; such that humans are different *in kind* to animals insofar as they have moral perceptions, and animals do not.

5. Hume contra Hutcheson

It would seem, then, that Hume's 'double relation' theory of love and hatred constitutes an attempt to break with Hutcheson's conception of these two passions as arising from an innate moral sense. Having made this point, however, we might ask just why this is. One answer here, and one with scholarly pedigree, is that Hume conceived of his 'double relation' theory of love and hatred as an experimental improvement of Hutcheson's moral sense theory.[232] More precisely, we find that while both Hume and Hutcheson are equally committed to treating experience as the source and arbiter of their hypotheses regarding human nature, Hume discovers that he can explain what Hutcheson had observed to be part of mankind's original constitution as the conjunction of two associative relations, relations that are open to influence from competing mental principles.

This answer seems correct, so far as it goes. Yet is it relatively uninformative. One way to flesh it out is to weave it within a narrative of secularisation. For Hutcheson does not simply think that a moral sense is part of mankind's original constitution, he also believes that:

> this very moral Sense, implanted in rational Agents, to delight in, and admire whatever Actions flow from a Study of the Good of others, is one of the strongest Evidences of Goodness in the Author of Nature.[233]

[232] See here Taylor, *Reflecting Subjects*, pp. 1-31; see also Gill, *The British Moralists*, pp. 217-8.
[233] *Inquiry*, 198.

This being the case, however, insofar as Hume deliberately sets his 'double relation' theory against Hutcheson's moral sense theory, then Hume can be seen to deliberately resist 'one of the strongest Evidences of Goodness in the Author of Nature', and to thereby attack the theological foundations of Hutcheson's moral philosophy.[234]

This also seems true, and could well explain why Hume never explicitly lists Hutcheson as a target of his account of love and hatred, given Hume's generally cautious approach to religious controversy in the *Treatise*.[235] This said, it is questionable just how far this constitutes an attack upon Hutcheson's moral philosophy itself. For Hutcheson points out that while:

> It has often been taken for granted in these Papers, That the Deity is morally good; tho the Reasoning is not at all built upon this Supposition.[236]

Instead the foundation of Hutcheson's philosophy, or what he calls (speaking in second person), 'The chief Ground of his Assurance that his Opinions in the main are just'[237], is:

> That as he took the first Hints of them [his opinions] from some of the greatest Writers of Antiquity, so the more he has convers'd with them, he finds his Illustrations the more conformable to their Sentiments.[238]

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[234] Both Taylor (2015) and Gill (2006) read Hume's engagement with Hutcheson as an attack on the theological foundations of Hutcheson's science of human nature.
[235] For an extensive discussion of Hume's cautious irreligion in the *Treatise* see Paul Russell, *The Riddle of Hume's Treatise: Skepticism, Naturalism, and Irreligion*, Oxford University Press, 2008, esp. pp. 267-78.
[236] *Inquiry*, 197.
[237] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 12.

In particular, Hutcheson says that his moral sense theory confirms the Ancient maxim that the best life for human beings is '*Vita secundum naturam*; or acting according to what we may see from the Constitution of our Nature, we were intended for by our Creator'[239]. For what Hutcheson's theory reveals is that the 'Perfection of Virtue', which he thinks consists in having 'universal calm Benevolence, the prevalent Affection of the Mind'[240], is also the 'highest perfection of our nature'; as it assures us of the constant approbation of all rational agents, including moral self-approbation.[241] In this way, Hutcheson believed himself to have provided experimental confirmation of what the ancient moralists took as self-evident, but that had since been obfuscated by both 'the *Schoolmen*' who placed everything in an intellectual appetite,[242] rather than benevolent affections, as well as their 'keenest *Adversaries*', the modern natural lawyers, who had sought 'to explain all *Approbation*, *Condemnation*, *Pleasure* and *Pain*, by some intricate Relations to the Perceptions of the *External Senses*'[243].

However, this being the case, it turns out that the foundation of Hutcheson's philosophy is the intellectual authority of Ancient testimony as to the best kind of life, rather than his theological beliefs – experimental or otherwise – about the moral goodness of the Deity. As such, while it is true to say that Hume's double relation theory of the origin of love and hatred discredits the theological implications of Hutcheson's moral sense theory, this is not a substantive attack

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[238] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 12.
[239] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 8.
[240] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 8.
[241] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 8.
[242] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 4.
[243] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 4.

on the foundation of Hutcheson's philosophy, and thus it is not (in itself, at least) an advance beyond it. Yet, by the same measure, insofar as the foundation of Hutcheson's philosophy is the ancient belief that the good life is the life lived according to nature, then we can articulate a sense in which Hume's 'double relation' theory does constitute a substantive attack on the foundation of Hutcheson's philosophy.

For, just like the Ancient moralists, Hutcheson believed that the content of the injunction to live "according to nature" was tied to essential differences between mankind and other creatures. Hutcheson makes a number of remarks to this extent, yet the clearest is in his *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (1728), where he is discussing the superiority of moral pleasures to pleasures of the external senses. There he writes that:

> To every Nature there are certain Tastes assigned by the great Author of all. To the human Race there are assigned a *publick Taste*, a *moral one*, and a *Taste for Honour*. These Senses they cannot extirpate, more than their external Senses … they cannot be happy but by keeping them in their natural State, and gratifying them. The Happiness of an *Insect* or *Brute*, will only make an *Insect* or *Brute* happy. But a Nature with further Powers, must have further Enjoyments.[244]

As such, what we find is that when Hutcheson argues that love and hatred (I*), as well as generosity (II*) and honour (III*) all arise, at least in part, from an innate

[244] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 90.

moral sense, then Hutcheson is effectively explaining the origin of these passions by appealing to an essential difference between human beings and animals.

With Hume, however, things are very different. Most notably, Hume concludes his account of love and hatred with a section titled '*Of the love and hatred of animals*' (T 2.2.12, SBN 397-8), and he begins this section with the claim that:

> to pass from the passions of love and hatred … as they appear in man, to the same affections, as they display themselves in brutes; we may observe, not only that love and hatred are common to the whole sensitive creation, but likewise that their causes, as above-explain'd, are of so simple a nature, that they may easily be suppos'd to operate on mere animals. There is no force of reflection or penetration requir'd. Every thing is conducted by springs and principles, which are not peculiar to man, or any one species of animals. The conclusion from this is obvious in favour of the foregoing system.
>
> (T 2.2.12.1, SBN 397)

Hume's explicit intention in making this comparison is to contend for the truth of his 'system' of love and hatred, on the whole. Hume had followed the same procedure in his account of pride and humility, and had ended his treatment '*Of knowledge and probability*' in Book One with a study '*Of the reason of animals*' (T 1.3.16, SBN 176-9).[245] There Hume had asserted that:

> When any hypothesis … is advanc'd to explain a mental operation, which is common to men and beasts, we must apply the same hypothesis to both; and as every true

[245] See also the concluding paragraph of the section '*Of the direct passions*' (T 2.3.9.32, SBN 448).

> hypothesis will abide this trial, so I may venture to affirm, that no false one will ever be able to endure it.
>
> (T 1.3.16.3, SBN 177)

This procedure was, Hume thought, 'a kind of touchstone, by which we may try every system in this species of philosophy', i.e. moral philosophy, or the study of human nature (T 1.3.16.3, SBN 176). As such, for him to apply this 'touchstone' to his account of love and hatred is for him to assert the truth of his 'system' of these passions.

At the same time, however, Hume's discussion of the of the causes of love and hatred in animals also serves to show that (I), (II), and (III) are not essentially human expressions of love and hatred, but are either unique to human beings, or arise more notably in humans than in animals, because of mankind's superior degree of intellect, compared to animals. For instance, as regards (I), Hume explains that:

> [a]s animals are but little susceptible either of the pleasures or pains of the imagination, they can judge of objects only by the sensible good or evil, which they produce, and from that must regulate their affections towards them. Accordingly we find, that by benefits or injuries we produce their love or hatred; and that by feeding and cherishing any animal, we quickly acquire his affections; as by beating and abusing him we never fail to draw on us his enmity and ill-will.
>
> (T 2.2.12.3, SBN 397)

This is to say, however, that animals do not 'regulate' their affections towards others according to whether their actions are intentional or not. But rather that, unlike with humans, animals will love those who benefit them and hate those who injure them simply insofar as beneficial and injurious actions tend to produce sensible pleasures and pains.

As regards (II) Hume says that:

> Love in beasts is not caus'd so much by relation, as in our species; and that because their thoughts are not so active as to trace relations, except in very obvious instances. Yet 'tis easy to remark, that on some occasions it has a considerable influence upon them. Thus acquaintance, which has the same effect as relation, always produces love in animals either to men or to each other.
>
> (T 2.2.12.4, SBN 397)

Here Hume makes the point that since animals have difficulty tracing specific relations of ideas, e.g. blood relations, we find that the strength of their relations to others generally have less influence on their expressions of love than what we find 'in our species'. At the same time, however, since both animals and humans naturally find the company of other thinking beings entertaining, we find that animals tend to love those who they most commonly associate with – i.e. their acquaintances – just as what we find with humans.

As for (III), Hume says that:

> 'Tis evident, that sympathy, or the communication of passions, takes place among animals, no less than among men. Fear, anger, courage and other affections are frequently communicated from one animal to another, without their knowledge of that cause, which produc'd the original passion.
>
> (T 2.2.12.6, SBN 398)

By the same measure, however, insofar as animals lack any knowledge of the original cause of sympathetic passions, it turns out that their affections towards the rich and powerful are not prompted, as in humans, by their sympathetic understanding that riches and power are pleasing to those who possess them, but by the expectation of benefits from such persons ((b) above).[246]

Ultimately, then, Hume's discussion of love and hatred in animals serves to show that any differences in the expression of these passions between humans and animals can be explained by appealing to the fact that human beings have greater intellectual capacities than animals do. More precisely, we find that mankind's superior intellectual capacities, vis-à-vis animals, see that relations of ideas play an enhanced role in our expressions of love and hatred, vis-à-vis animals. This being the case, however, Hume can conclude that (I), (II), and (III) do not point to

[246] To be clear, the claim here is that animals love rich and powerful people simply insofar as they expect benefits from such persons, and not because of any sympathetic understanding of the pleasures that riches and power produce in those who possess them (which is the case with humans). As such, an animal's love for a rich and powerful person who benefits them is no different from their love for a poor and weak person who benefits them. Note, however, that this is not to say that Hume thinks animals are incapable of understanding that a person (or another animal) is powerful. For Hume says that '[s]trength is a kind of power' (T 2.1.8.4, SBN 300) and he lists bodily strength amongst the causes of pride that animals are capable of recognising (T 2.1.12.5, SBN 326). There is every reason to think, then, that Hume thinks that animals are able to recognise other creatures as being powerful, and to love them for it. The point remains, however, that animals do not love the powerful on account of a sympathetic understanding of the pleasure that such power brings to one who has it, but only when the powerful use their power to confer benefits upon them.

any essential difference between man and animals, but that the passions of love and hatred have the same origin in both human beings and other creatures.[247]

It bears pointing out here that Hume's attempt to efface any essential difference between man and animals doubles as an attempt to discredit Hutcheson's conception of human nature as having been designed by – and in the image of – a benevolent Deity. Yet, more fundamentally, it attacks the Ancient philosophical belief in the essential superiority of human beings over other sentient creatures. And while Hutcheson himself was alive to the sophistries involved in the Ancient belief that 'reason' was the mark of mankind's essential superiority over beasts,[248] his own emphasis on an innate moral sense as the distinctive mark of mankind's higher nature only served to reproduce this Ancient falsehood in an experimental guise. Against this, Hume's 'double relation' theory of love and hatred, as applied to both man and beast, allows him to remove the remnants of this sophistry from Hutcheson's philosophy, whilst maintaining its experimental thrust.

6. Conclusion

My aim in the above has been to extract an overall design from Hume's account of love and hatred. To do so I have focused on three difficulties that Hume identifies for his system of these passions and I have argued that Hume's

[247] The point here being that mankind's superior intellectual capacities, vis-à-vis animals, constitute a difference *in degree* between human and animal natures, not any difference *in kind*.
[248] See in particular Hutcheson's *Illustrations upon the Moral Sense* (1728), especially section 1. Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, pp. 133-55.

solutions to these difficulties deliberately target Hutcheson's moral sense theory. Moreover, I have argued that Hume targets Hutcheson's moral sense theory because it posits an essential difference between human and animal natures. Hume, by contrast, explains the origin of love and hatred without positing any essential difference between human beings and animals. As such, Hume's 'double relation' theory passes his litmus test for a true philosophical account of these passions, while Hutcheson's moral sense theory fails.

Yet, by itself, this reconstruction of Hume's intentions does not explain the overall design of his exposition of love and hatred. For, having set out his system of these passions, and having resolved the particular difficulties that it faces, Hume proceeds to examine what he calls 'the compound affections, which arise from the mixture of love and hatred with other emotions' (T 2.2.3.1, SBN 347). These are: pity, malice, envy, respect, contempt and romantic love (see T 2.2.7-11, SBN 368-96). As it happens, it is Hume's attempt to square these 'compound' passions with his 'double relation' theory that causes his exposition of love and hatred to become unwieldy. As such, any general account of Hume's intentions must be able to rein these 'compound' passions in.

Happily, however, an explanation is not hard to find. For it is worth recalling that while Hutcheson regards our sense of moral good and evil as the most significant difference between man and other animals, he also believes that there are other differences; namely, our public sense, and our sense of honour.[249] Importantly here, Hutcheson thinks that our sense of what is honourable and dishonourable

[249] See Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 90.

is founded on our moral sense, or more precisely, on our perception of a person's (our own self included) moral merit and demerit in the eyes of other moral agents.[250] This being the case, Hume's hypothesis that the passions of respect and contempt arise from the mixture of love with humility, and hatred with pride, would seem to be a fairly straightforward attempt to dismiss Hutcheson's sense of honour as false (see T 2.2.10, SBN 389-93). The same is true of Hume's attempt to explain romantic love using his 'double relation' theory (see T 2.2.11, SBN 394-6). For Hutcheson had sought to account for 'love between the sexes'[251] in terms of moral perceptions, so as to distinguish even the 'looser conduct'[252] of this kind in humans from the amoral copulation of animals.[253]

Our public sense, on the other hand, is distinct from our moral sense. More precisely, Hutcheson holds that it is by an innate public sense that we humans come to be pleased with the happiness of others, and uneasy at their misery, without regard for their moral qualities.[254] This being the case, however, we find that pity, or a benevolent concern for the misfortunes of others is unique to human beings, while other creatures merely feel a selfish desire to avoid sympathetic pains.[255] Moreover, it is our public sense that explains why humans naturally take pleasure in the happiness of others, whereas animals – as well as overly selfish humans – feel envy and malice.[256]

[250] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 18.
[251] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 170.
[252] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 171.
[253] Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 170-1.
[254] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 17.
[255] See here Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 23.
[256] See here Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, pp. 52-3, 124-5.

So far as this is the case, then it would seem that Hume's attempt to draw pity, envy, and malice under his 'double relation' hypothesis – however tortured – is part of his attack on Hutcheson's experimental belief – following the Ancients – that human beings are essentially superior to animals. Indeed it is notable here that Hume's own explanation of why envy and malice are common in animals, while pity is uncommon, is that the former passions require 'less effort of thought and imagination' than pity does (T 2.2.12.6, SBN 398). Thus Hume's account of why pity is characteristically human, rather than animal, is ultimately the same as with (I), (II), and (III): because humans have greater intellectual capacities than animals do.

It would appear, then, that Hume's account of love and hatred, on the whole, is motivated by a desire to eradicate the ancient belief in humanity's essential superiority over animals from experimental moral science. In fact, insofar as Hutcheson believed his moral sense theory to also provide an account of moral *self*-approbation and *self*-disapprobation,[257] then it is even possible to view Hume's account of pride and humility as directed towards this end. For Hume also thinks that the causes of these self-regarding passions 'are much the same in beasts as in us, making a just allowance for our superior knowledge and understanding' (T 2.1.12.5, SBN 326). Yet, supposing that this was Hume's overall design behind his 'double relation' hypothesis, then one could even say that this hypothesis – which Hume describes as initiating a Copernican revolution in moral philosophy (T 2.2.3.7, SBN 282) – ultimately functions to

[257] See here Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, pp. 55-6.

displace humans from the centre of the moral universe by revealing their essential similarity to animals.

Indeed, having seen in the previous chapter that Hume's 'double relation' hypothesis also targets the superstitious prejudices at the basis of Mandeville's theory of 'self-liking', we can draw an even more extensive conclusion. For it is not only our self-regarding affections that Mandeville reduces to self-liking. Rather, as mentioned at the outset, Mandeville also thought that we *love* those who satisfy our self-liking, and *hate* those who frustrate it. Indeed Mandeville – provocatively – even goes so far as to suggest that the 'great Liking, which Creatures have for their own Individuals, is the Principle on which the Love for the Species is built' – because we most love those creatures who are most like ourselves.[258] Against this background, we might read Hume's theory of our 'indirect' passions, considered on the whole, as an attempt to, contra Hutcheson, displace humans from the centre of the moral universe by revealing their essential similarity to animals; yet, contra Mandeville, to do so without conceptualising this shift as a fall from grace.

[258] Mandeville, *Fable Part II*, p. 131.

4. Liberating the Will: Hume against the 'Metaphysicians'

1. Introduction

With the completion of his account of pride and humility (Book Two, Part One) and of love and hatred (Book Two, Part Two), Hume completes his account of what he calls the 'indirect' passions. This done, he moves on to what he says will be a discussion '*Of the Will and Direct Passions*' (Book Two, Part Three). Regarding the 'direct passions', however, Hume has little to say. Instead remarking that '[n]one of the direct affections seem to merit our particular attention, except hope and fear' (T 2.3.9.9, SBN 439), and devoting only one section to the discussion of these passions (T 2.3.9, SBN 438-48).[259] Regarding

[259] Hume concludes Book Two Part Three with a section titled '*Of curiosity, or the love of truth*' (2.3.10, SBN 448-54) (for an extended discussion of Hume's account of curiosity, see chapter five). Hume's inclusion of an account of curiosity within the part of Book Two titled '*Of the Will and Direct Passions*' suggests that curiosity, since it is not the will, is a direct passion. Yet, when introducing curiosity, Hume claims that this passion is 'an affection of so peculiar a kind, that t'woud have been impossible to have treated of it under any of those heads, which we have examin'd, without danger of obscurity and confusion' (T 2.3.10.1, SBN 448). As such, seeing that Hume had titled the section immediately preceding his account of curiosity, '*Of the direct passions*', it would seem that he did not think that curiosity was a direct passion, at least not of the ordinary kind. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Hume at one point seems to include 'volition' amongst the direct passions (T 2.3.9.2, SBN 438), and even defines 'The Will' in the same paragraph as he defines 'Desire', which is arguably the archetypal direct passion (T 2.3.9.7, SBN 439). This might seem to suggest that the will itself is a direct passion. Yet, when introducing the will, Hume – as we shall see – says that 'properly speaking' the will is 'not comprehended amongst the passions' (T 2.3.1.2, SBN 399). Collectively considered, these points all suggest that Hume had a rather fluid view of where the various 'impressions of reflection' that he discusses fit within his overall system of the passions – if not an outright confused one: and this is without even mentioning that Hume's giving (what seem to be) definitions of the

the will, by contrast, Hume has plenty to say, devoting eight sections (T 2.3.1-8, SBN 399-438) to questions 'concerning the will' (T 2.3.4.1, SBN 419).

Indeed Hume's discussion of 'the will' in the *Treatise* is one of the best-known parts of his philosophy. Hume's arguments against the existence of free-will (T 2.3.1-2, SBN 399-412)[260] and against the motivating power of reason (T 2.3.3, SBN 413-8)[261] could even be said to lead lives of their own, independent of anything else that Hume says in the *Treatise*, if not the rest of his philosophical writings.[262] At the same time, however, Hume's discussion of the will across *Treatise* 2.3.1-8 is integral part of the *Treatise*, and especially of the science of the passions that he develops in Book Two. In fact, although Hume says that 'properly speaking' the will is 'not comprehended amongst the passions', he

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various direct passions itself flatly contradicts his initial claim that none of the passions are capable of definition, given that they are all 'simple impressions' (see T 2.1.2.1, SBN 277)).

[260] See also, David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, (ed. Stephen Buckle) Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 73-91 (8).

[261] See also David Hume, *A Dissertation on the Passions: The Natural History of Religion: A Critical Edition*, (ed. Tom Beauchamp), Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 24-5 (5).

[262] Hume's arguments against 'free-will' (T 2.3.1, SBN 399-407) and his assertion that 'the doctrine of necessity' is 'so essential to religion and morality, that without it there must ensue an absolute subversion of both' (T 2.3.2, SBN 407-12) are widely understood to be an early statement of the "compatibilist" position that moral responsibility can be reconciled with causal determinism (see here Paul Russell, 'Hume on Free Will', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL:plato.stanford.edu/entries/hume-freewill – accessed 6 Jan 2020). Whereas Hume's arguments against the motivational efficacy of reason are thought to herald the so-called "Humean theory of motivation" that 'belief is insufficient for motivation, which always requires, in addition to belief, the presence of a desire or conative state' (Connie S. Rosati, 'Moral Motivation', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.),URL:plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-motivation – accessed 9 Jan 2020). There are good reasons to think that neither the "Humean theory of motivation" or a considered defence of "compatibilism" are to be found in *Treatise* 2.3.1-3, yet reason stands little chance of altering popular philosophical consciousness on these points (regarding the "Humean theory of motivation" see P.J.E. Kail, *Projection and Realism in Hume's Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 189-96; Rachel Cohon, *Hume's Morality: Feeling and Fabrication*, Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 11-79, and Karl Schafer, 'Hume on Practical Reason', in *The Oxford Handbook of Hume* (ed. Paul Russell), Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 356-79, but see Elizabeth S. Radcliffe, *Hume, Passion, and Action*, Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 29-64; regarding "compatibilism" see James A. Harris, *Of Liberty and Necessity: The Free-Will Debate in Eighteenth Century British Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 64-87; but see Paul Russell, *The Riddle of Hume's Treatise: Skepticism, Naturalism, and Irreligion*, Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 225-38 (*Riddle*)).

nevertheless asserts that a 'full understanding of its nature and properties, is necessary to the explanation of them' (T 2.3.1.2, SBN 399).

It might seem surprising that Hume regards a 'full understanding' of the will as being 'necessary' to the explanation of the passions. For Hume's science of the passions, and especially of the 'indirect' passions, presents the passions of individuals as being regulated by the passions of others, whose passions are in turn regulated by the passions of those around them.[263] Whereas 'the *will*', Hume thinks, is 'nothing but *the internal impression we feel and are conscious of, when we knowingly give rise to any new motion in our body, or new perception of our mind*' (T 2.3.1.2, SBN 399). As such, it is tempting to conclude that Hume's overall point with his science of the passions is that the will is *not* necessary to an explanation of the passions – for the will has no regulative role to play in determining our actions, but is merely an impression that accompanies certain actions, and sets them apart as our volitional actions.[264]

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[263] See here Jane L. McIntyre, 'Hume's 'New and extraordinary' account of the passions', *The Blackwell Guide to Hume's Treatise*, (ed. Saul Traiger), Malden, MA: Blackwell, (2006) pp. 199-215; and James A. Harris, 'The Government of the Passions', in *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century*, (ed. James A. Harris), Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 270–88.

[264] See here James A. Harris, 'Free-Will' in *The Continuum Companion to Hume*, (eds. Alan Bailey and Dan O'Brien), Continuum, 2012, pp. 215-6. It ought to be mentioned that while Hume is quite emphatic that he understands 'the will' to be 'nothing but' an 'internal impression' (T 2.3.1.2, SBN 399), he nevertheless tends to speak of the will as if it were a faculty of the mind; much like 'the imagination' or 'reason', or even 'the passions' - with which he often pairs such talk of 'the will' (see here, for instance: T 1.1.4.5, SBN 12; T 1.3.10.2-5, SBN 118-21; T 2.2.5.6, SBN 359). What should we make of this? It may well be that Hume was grossly inconsistent (it certainly would not be a surprise), but, on the other hand, Hume seems at one point (T 2.1.10.4-7, SBN 311-4) to suggest that belief in 'the will' – considered as a latent power to act on whichever of one's desires one chooses to – is a falsehood that is kept in place by the inertia of our passionate responses to the incorrect yet naturally occurring supposition that we and those around us possess such a power (especially responses of hope and fear). Indeed, Hume even seems to suggest that we maintain beliefs in such powers even though a 'just and philosophical way of thinking' would have us believe that any distinction between a power and its exercise is 'entirely frivolous' (see here T 2.1.10.4-7, SBN 311-4). Not being able to pursue this observation any further, I think that the safest thing to say is that Hume had an unorthodox conception of 'the will', whatever his actual opinion was.

It is certainly true that Hume had no time for the will as traditionally conceived, and saw no place for it within his science of the passions. Yet, whatever else he may have thought, he no doubt held that a complete explanation of the passions must include an account of the *effects* of the passions, as well as of their *causes*, and that, to this end, an account of the will – even as no more than an impression accompanying a certain type of actions – was an essential part of any account of the passions. Indeed, it is arguable that Hume's arguments against the existence of free-will and against the motivating power of reason, were chiefly intended to clear the way for a general account of the effects of the passions upon the will, which is to say, upon the subset of actions that we 'knowingly' perform.

That Hume intended something like this with his account of the will seems clear enough. Less clear, however, are Hume's designs for his specific account of the effects of the passions upon the will, which he sets out across *Treatise* 2.3.4-8. For while Hume tells us that in these sections he will investigate the influence of both 'violent' and 'calm' passions upon the will – indeed he asserts that '[t]here is not in philosophy a subject of more nice speculation than this of the different *causes* and *effects* of the calm and violent passions' (T 2.3.4.1, SBN 418) – it is difficult to tell what he intended his own speculations on the subject to establish.[265]

[265] Nor is it helpful that Hume's detailed considerations as to the influence of calm and violent passions upon the will are usually lumped under the broad heading of "desires", when discussed in the context of the "Humean theory of motivation".

For, on the one hand, Hume uses the sections 2.3.4-8 to develop a detailed description of the general principles that determine the influence of calm and violent passions upon the will: the kind of description that a politician might draw upon when governing the passions of a populace, and that Hume himself would later draw upon to explain the origin of justice and property.[266] Yet, on the other hand, Hume's account of these principles is laced with caveats that speak to the ultimate inscrutability of the causes of volitional actions, at least in the case of individuals. Indeed, Hume concludes his account of the will with the claim that 'philosophy' must 'leave' individual instances of the so-called 'struggle of passion and of reason', as 'dependent on principles that are too fine and minute for her comprehension' (T 2.3.8.13, SBN 438).

These caveats seem more than merely incidental observations. Rather, it seems as if Hume is deliberately attempting to expose the limits of what we can justifiably assert regarding the causes of volitional actions. Yet, by the same measure, one might suspect that having asserted that both calm and violent passions determine the will, Hume found himself ill equipped to give a precise explanation of their influence upon how people act, especially in situations where they come into conflict – such that the uncertainty that Hume encounters here is not a problem for philosophy itself, but for Hume's philosophy in particular.

In what follows I address these ambiguities by giving a close reading of *Treatise* 2.3.4-8. To this end I begin by examining Hume's arguments in *Treatise* 2.3.3, '*Of*

[266] See here T 3.2.2, SBN 484-501.

the influencing motives of the will' (Section 2). Here I contend that at *Treatise* 2.3.3, Hume identifies two distinct philosophical fallacies regarding the influencing motives of the will. The first is the already well-studied error of confusing 'calm passions' for 'reason' and then supposing that 'reason' opposes the passions for influence over the will. The second, however, is the relatively neglected error of reducing the influencing motives of the will to one principle only – to either the violent passions or the calm passions – when in reality both calm *and* violent passions influence the will. Hume thinks that the first mistake is made by the majority of moral philosophers, while he calls the second error 'the common error of metaphysicians' (T 2.3.3.10, SBN 418); whom I take to be those philosophers who reject the first error, and agree with Hume that 'reason' does not influence the will.

I then argue that Hume's target 'metaphysicians' were John Locke and Francis Hutcheson (Section 3). Furthermore, I observe that both Locke and Hutcheson develop their diametrically opposed theories of the influencing motives of the will alongside a shared theory of 'humane liberty' as a 'power' that 'intellectual beings' possess to regulate their volitional actions, and which they might use either well or badly. This sets Locke and Hutcheson apart from other likely targets of Hume's criticism of 'metaphysicians', and warrants the suggestion that when Hume criticises 'metaphysicians', that he had Locke and Hutcheson's conception of 'liberty' in his sights.

Having made this claim I then turn to Hume's account of the causes and effects of the calm and violent passions across *Treatise* 2.3.4-8 (Section 4). Here I argue

that, when read together, these sections constitute an attempt to show that Locke and Hutcheson's conception of 'liberty' is not only not necessary to account for their target phenomena (commonplace abuses of liberty), but, worse still, that such a conception of liberty cannot be justified by appeal to experience. In doing so, I contend, Hume can be seen as liberating moral philosophy from the enduring prejudice that mankind's moral nature is tied to an essential difference between human beings and animals: either to our "intellectual" nature, or to a causally undetermined "free" will. For while both Locke and Hutcheson reject the ancient and superstitious forms of this common philosophical prejudice, their shared conception of 'humane liberty' serves only to re-state them in a sophisticated experimental guise. Against this background, Hume's *Treatise* account of the will, considered on the whole, reads as an attempt to liberate our understanding of our will from philosophical prejudices, both new and old, both secular and religious.

2. Two Errors Regarding the Influencing Motives of the Will

Hume opens *Treatise* 2.3.3, '*Of the influencing motives of the will*', with the observation that,

> [n]othing is more usual in philosophy, and even in common life, than to talk of the combat of passion and reason, to give the preference to reason, and to assert that men are only so far virtuous as they conform themselves to its dictates. Every rational creature, 'tis said, is oblig'd to regulate his actions by reason; and if any other motive or principle challenge the direction of his conduct, he ought to oppose it … On this

> method of thinking the greatest part of moral philosophy, antient and modern, seems to be founded; nor is there an ampler field for metaphysical arguments, as popular declamations, than this suppos'd pre-eminence of reason above passion.
>
> (T 2.3.3.1, SBN 413)

After painting this general picture of moral philosophy, Hume then attempts to 'shew the fallacy' (T 2.3.3.1, SBN 413) of it. Hume's arguments here turn upon the claim that the exertions of reason are exhausted by demonstrative and probable inferences, and thus that 'reason alone' can never be a motive to action, nor 'oppose passion in the direction of the will' (T 2.3.3.2-4, SBN 413-5). Having made out these arguments to his own satisfaction, Hume boldly asserts that: 'Reason is and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can pretend to no other office than to serve and obey them' (T 2.3.3.4, SBN 415).[267]

With this provocative claim in hand, Hume forwards an hypothesis as to why the majority of moral philosophers – both 'antient and modern' – have erroneously believed that that reason *is* a motive to action, and that reason can oppose – indeed ought to oppose – any passion that challenges it for influence over the will. So as to account for this widespread mistake, Hume contends that:

> 'Tis natural for one, that does not examine objects with a strict philosophic eye, to imagine, that those actions of the mind are entirely the same, which produce not a

[267] Hume's arguments here are some of the most highly contested – and discussed – of all his claims in the *Treatise*. To be clear, I am not concerned with the merits of Hume's claims regarding the motivational inefficacy of 'reason alone'. Rather, my aim is to develop a general picture of Hume's intentions for his account of the will as a whole. Of which his arguments against the motivating power of reason are an important part, but are nevertheless only one part.

> different sensation, and are not immediately distinguishable to the feeling and perception. Reason, for instance, exerts itself without producing any sensible emotion … Hence it proceeds, that every action of the mind, which operates with the same calmness and tranquillity, is confounded with reason by all those, who judge of things from the first view and appearance.
>
> (T 2.3.3.8, SBN 417)

With this claim in place, Hume then asserts that 'there are certain calm desires and tendencies, which, tho' they be real passions, produce little emotion in the mind, and are more known by their effects than by the immediate feeling or sensation' (T 2.3.3.8, SBN 417). These 'passions', Hume says, are either 'instincts' towards fixed objects that have been 'originally implanted' in human nature; such as our 'benevolence' towards those whom we love, and our 'resentment' towards those whom we hate (T 2.3.3.8, SBN 417); or they are instances of a 'general appetite' towards good and away from evil 'consider'd merely as such' (T 2.3.3.8, SBN 417). 'When any of these passions are calm', Hume says, 'they are very readily taken for the determinations of reason, and are suppos'd to proceed from the same faculty, with that, which judges of truth and falshood' (T 2.3.3.8, SBN 417). These 'calm passions', then, are what the majority of philosophers have in mind when they speak of "reason" as a motive to action.

Having asserted the existence of 'calm passions', Hume then claims that:

> Beside these calm passions, which often determine the will, there are certain violent emotions of the same kind, which have likewise a great influence on that faculty. When I receive any injury from another, I often feel a violent passion of resentment,

> which makes me desire his evil and punishment, independent of all considerations of pleasure and advantage to myself. When I am immediately threaten'd with any grievous ill, my fears, apprehensions, and aversions rise to a great height, and produce a sensible emotion.
>
> (T 2.3.3.9, SBN 417-8)

There are two important points to note regarding Hume's distinction between 'calm passions' and 'violent passions'. The first is that Hume regards both 'calm' and 'violent' passions as being 'of the same kind'. This is to say that there is no essential difference between a 'calm' and a 'violent' passion, but rather that they are phenomenally distinct manifestations of the same thing, namely, a passion. It is not the case, for instance, that "calm" passions are sensationless desires and aversions, while "violent" passions are a complex of sensationless desires and aversions and violent sensations. Rather, Hume conceives of passions as 'impressions' that arise from ideas, or from other impressions (i.e. as what he calls 'impressions of reflection'), and that typically produce a sensible emotion in the mind (see here T 2.1.1.1-3, SBN 275-6). This being the case, a passion is a typically 'violent' impression of reflection, but one that may, in certain circumstances, 'produce little emotion in the mind', and thus may be uncharacteristically 'calm'.[268] This point is reflected in Hume's claim that our 'calm desires and tendencies' are 'real passions', despite the fact that they 'produce little emotion in the mind'.

[268] For a detailed discussion of Hume's distinction between calm and violent passions see Katharina Paxman, 'Imperceptible Impressions and Disorder in the Soul: A Characterization of the Distinction between Calm and Violent Passions in Hume', *The Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, 13.3 (2015), pp. 265–278.

The second point to note is that Hume thinks both 'calm' and 'violent' passions determine the will to action. In particular, Hume writes that 'calm passions … often determine the will' and that violent passions 'likewise have a great influence upon that faculty' (T 2.3.3.9, SBN 417-8). Hume is concerned to stress this point so as to distinguish himself from a separate class of philosophers, whom he says mistakenly suppose that only either calm or violent passions have any influence upon the will. Here Hume writes that:

> The common error of metaphysicians has lain in ascribing the direction of the will entirely to one of these principles [i.e. either calm or violent passions], and supposing the other to have no influence.
>
> (T 2.3.3.10, SBN 418)

In contrast to these 'metaphysicians', Hume holds that '[i]n general we may observe, that both these principles operate on the will; and where they are contrary, that either of them prevails, according to the *general* character or *present* disposition of the person' (T 2.3.3.10, SBN 418). Hence the so-called 'combat of passion and reason' turns out to be a combat between violent and calm passions for influence over the will.

At which point Hume has an explanation for the commonplace fallacy that "reason" and passion challenge each other for influence over the will. In giving this explanation, however, Hume can be seen to identify a second 'common' fallacy regarding the influencing motives of the will, namely, the error of those 'metaphysicians' who reduce the influencing motives of the will to a single

principle, rather than acknowledging that both 'violent' and 'calm' passions influence the will. Such 'metaphysicians', it would seem, are distinct from the majority of moral philosophers insofar as they recognise that, strictly speaking, reason does not influence the will, and therefore that there is no 'combat of passion and reason'. Unfortunately, however, they then commit the error of reducing the influencing motives of the will to a single principle of action, when in reality there are two.

As such, it would seem that Hume's arguments at *Treatise* 2.3.3 target not one but two philosophical fallacies regarding the influencing motives of the will. The first is an error made by careless philosophers 'who judge of things from the first view and appearance' rather than 'with a strict philosophic eye'. Namely, it is the sophistry of confusing the calm operations of reason with calm passions, and then mistakenly believing that conflicts between calm and violent passions are conflicts between reason and passion. Hume thinks that most ancient and modern moralists are guilty of this error, as well as the vulgar.

The second error is that made by 'metaphysicians'. Such philosophers *do* examine their objects with a *strict* philosophic eye; hence they do not commit the sophistry of mistaking reason for a motive to action. Their error, however, is one of reductive over-generalisation. For, having discovered that reason does not determine the will to action, they then suppose either that all volitional actions are the product of what Hume calls 'violent' passions, or that all volitional actions are the product of what he calls 'calm' passions. Whereas in actual fact – at least

according to Hume – the will is determined to action by both 'calm' and 'violent' passions.

3. Hume's 'Metaphysicians'

If this is a good reading of Hume's arguments in *Treatise* 2.3.3 then we can ask who it was that Hume believed to have committed the 'common error of metaphysicians'. It seems reasonable to believe that Hume regarded the error of reducing the influencing motives of the will to a single principle to be a widespread (i.e. 'common') mistake amongst philosophers who denied that reason was a motive to action. Yet it also seems likely that Hume had specific philosophers in mind whose 'common error' was to reduce the influencing motives of the will to a single principle. At the very least it is safe to presume that Hume had two such 'metaphysicians' in mind: one who mistakenly reduces the influencing motives of the will to violent passions only, and one who mistakenly reduces the influencing motives of the will to calm passions only.

3.1. Violent Passions: Locke

There are a number of philosophers who potentially fit Hume's bill for a 'metaphysician' who reduces all volitional actions to the products of violent passions. Hobbes is certainly in the running, and Mandeville may well be too.[269] This said, however, the clearest example of such a philosopher, and therefore one

[269] See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan.* Ed. Edwin Curley. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994, (*Leviathan*) pp. 33-4; see also Mandeville '*An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour and the Usefulness of Christianity in War*' London. 1732 (*Honour*), pp. 5-6, 31.

whom Hume can be expected to have had at the forefront of his mind is Locke. Indeed, it is arguable that Locke was Hume's chief target when he complains of 'the common error of metaphysicians'.

For Locke had explicitly rejected what he regarded as the 'established and settled' position that the will is determined by 'the greater good in view'.[270] Instead, having set himself the question: 'What is it that determines the will in regard to our actions?' Locke had argued that it 'is not, as is generally supposed, the greater good in view; but some (and for the most part the most pressing) uneasiness a man is at present under'[271]. Amongst the many reasons that Locke gives to support this conclusion, the most pertinent for present purposes is his (ponderous, but illuminating) observation that:

> Were the will determined by the views of good, as it appears in contemplation greater or less to the understanding, which is the state of all absent good, and that which in the received opinion the will is supposed to move to, and to be moved by, I do not see how it could ever get loose from the infinite eternal joys of heaven, once proposed and considered as possible … If it were so, that the greater good in view determines the will, so great a good once proposed could not but seize the will, and hold it fast to the pursuit of this infinitely greatest good, without ever letting it go again...
>
> This would be the state of the mind, and regular tendency of the will in all its determinations, were it determined by that which is considered, and in view the greater good; but that it is not so, is visible in experience: the infinitely greatest confessed good being often neglected, to satisfy the successive uneasiness of our

[270] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (*Essay*), (ed. P. H. Nidditch), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, p. 252 (2.21.35).
[271] Locke, *Essay*, p. 250 (2.21.31).

> desires pursuing trifles … Thus any vehement pain of the body, the ungovernable passion of a man violently in love, or the impatient desire of revenge, keeps the will steady and intent … whereby it seems to me evident, that the will or power of setting us upon one action in preference to all other, is determined in us by uneasiness.[272]

What we find, then – and quite clearly – is that Locke rejects the 'received opinion' amongst moralists that 'views' of good serve as the cause of volitional actions. Instead Locke holds that, in all cases, the will is determined by the 'uneasiness' of our desire for absent goods. In fact, it is Locke's considered opinion that 'desire', properly understood, is 'nothing but an uneasiness in the want of an absent good'[273], and that when 'beset with sundry uneasinesses' or 'distracted with different desires' our 'greatest present uneasiness is the spur to action … and for the most part determines the will in its choice of the next action'[274].

I will return to examine Locke's caveat that it is only 'for the most part' that our greatest present uneasiness determines the will. For now, however, the point to stress is that when Hume remarks at the end of *Treatise* 2.3.3 that:

> Men often act knowingly against their interest: For which reason the view of the greatest possible good does not always influence them. Men often counter-act a violent passion in prosecution of their interests and designs: 'Tis not therefore the present uneasiness alone, which determines them.
>
> (T 2.3.3.10, SBN 418)

[272] Locke, *Essay*, pp. 255-6 (2.21.38).
[273] Locke, *Essay*, p. 251 (2.21.31).
[274] Locke, *Essay*, p. 257 (2.21.40).

He can be seen to both approve of Locke's observation that present uneasiness determines the will, rather than 'views' of the greatest good, while also resisting Locke's attempt to reduce *all* volitional actions to the effects of present pressing uneasiness. So far as this is a good reading of Hume's designs, we can conclude that Locke was one of those metaphysicians whom he thought made the error of reducing the influencing motives of the will to violent passions only, and afforded no influence to calm passions.

3.2. Calm Passions: Hutcheson

If Locke was Hume's likely target with regard to violent passions, who then might he have thought was a 'metaphysician' who reduced the influencing motives of the will to calm passions only, and who afforded no influence to violent passions? We can infer that Hume has at least one such philosopher in mind insofar as he says that the 'common error of metaphysicians' has been to reduce the influencing motives of the will to a single principle: either to calm or to violent passions. And the best candidate with regard to calm passions, it would seem, is Francis Hutcheson.

For while it is difficult to be sure that Hume thought Hutcheson was such a 'metaphysician', there are also considerable reasons to think that he did. The first reason is that Hutcheson, like Locke, rejected the widely held belief that the rational contemplation of the greatest possible good serves to determine the will

to action.[275] Instead Hutcheson held that it was impossible to pursue what one understood to be the greatest good, without there being some prior good end that one acts for.[276] And since Hutcheson held that acting for an end implies the existence of an affection towards the end in question, it turns out that rational actions presuppose affections, rather than that reason determines the will prior to – and in conflict with – affections.[277] As such, we find that Hutcheson was a philosopher who had examined the causes of volitional actions with a 'strict philosophic eye' and had concluded that reason does not influence the will.

The second reason is that Hutcheson explicitly rejects Locke's identification of desire with uneasy sensations, and instead takes up a diametrically opposed position. More precisely, Hutcheson regards those '*modifications* of our mind' which 'directly incline the Mind to *Action* or *Volition of Motion*' as being 'entirely distinct from all *Sensation*'[278]. These are what Hutcheson calls 'desire' and 'aversion', which, according to Hutcheson, are the only modifications of mind that ought properly to be called 'affections'.[279]

Hutcheson sets his position against Locke's on both empirical and conceptual grounds. For, on the one hand, Hutcheson thinks that 'some tempers',

[275] See here Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, (ed. Aaron Garrett), Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, (2002) (*Essay with Illustrations*), pp. 133-55.
[276] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, pp. 139-141.
[277] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, pp. 139-141.
[278] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 30.
[279] See Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 30.

> seem to have as strong *Desires* as any, by the Constancy and Vigor of their Pursuits, either of publick or private Good; and yet give small Evidence of any *uneasy Sensation.* … Nay, if we consult our selves, and not the common Systems, we shall perhaps find, that the noblest Desire in our Nature, that of *universal Happiness,* is generally calm, and wholly free from any confused uneasy Sensation … Yea, further, Desire may be as strong as possible toward a certainly future Event, the fixed Time of its Existence being also known, and yet we are not conscious of any *Pain* attending such Desires.[280]

This said, however, Hutcheson nevertheless concedes that,

> [i]f it seems too rash to assert … that *Desire* may subsist without any *uneasiness,* since perhaps we are never conscious of any Desire absolutely free from all uneasiness; let it be considered, that the simple Idea of *Desire* is different from that of Pain of any kind, or from any *Sensation* whatsoever: Nor is there any other Argument for their Identity than this, that they occur to us at once: But this Argument is inconclusive, otherwise it would prove *Colour* and *Figure* to be the same, or *Incision* and *Pain*.[281]

As such, Hutcheson concludes that there is no reason to suppose, as Locke had, that desire and uneasiness are the same. Indeed there is no good reason to think that desires have any sensory qualities at all, but rather that, as Hutcheson himself held, desire and aversion are 'entirely distinct from all *Sensation*'.

[280] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 40.
[281] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, pp. 39-40.

The upshot of Hutcheson's position is that what he regards as the sole influencing motives of the will – desire and aversion – are what Hume would call 'calm passions'. That is, passions that are 'more known by their effects than by the immediate feeling or sensation'. Towards this point it is notable that Hume himself holds that the colour and figure of objects are the same, and that such 'distinctions of reason' merely reflect different ways of conceiving an object (see here T 1.1.7.17-8, SBN 24-5). As applied to the case at hand, we could say that Hutcheson conceives of what Hume calls 'calm passions' by their effects upon the will, and then mistakenly concludes that they are 'entirely distinct from all sensation'. Whereas, to Hume, what Hutcheson calls 'affections' are just relatively 'calm' impressions of reflection, and are simply 'more known' by their effects upon the will than by the nature of their sensation; rather than being 'entirely distinct from all sensation', as Hutcheson thought.

None of which is to say, however, that Hutcheson thought our desires and aversions were without any *attendant* uneasiness or other sensations. Indeed Hutcheson, following Malebranche, held that mankind's desires and aversions are naturally attended with a number of different sensations.[282] Most pertinently, Hutcheson held that 'there are in our Nature violent *confused Sensations,* connected with *bodily Motions,* from which our *Affections* are denominated *Passions*'[283].

[282] Hutcheson acknowledges his debt to Malebranche's system of the passions on a number of occasions (see here *Essay with Illustrations*, pp. 31, 49-51, 55, 63-4). For Malebranche's system see Nicholas Malebranche, *The Search After Truth*, (trans. T. Lennon and P. Olscamp), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 (*Search*), pp. 337-407.
[283] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 51.

More precisely, Hutcheson held that:

> When the word *Passion* is imagined to denote any thing different from the *Affections,* it includes, beside the *Desire* or *Aversion,* beside the *calm Joy* upon apprehended Possession of Good, or *Sorrow* from the Loss of it, or from impending Evil, a *confused Sensation* either of Pleasure or Pain, occasioned or attended by some violent bodily Motions, which keeps the Mind much employed upon the present Affair, to the exclusion of every thing else, and prolongs or strengthens the Affection sometimes to such a degree, as to prevent all *deliberate Reasoning* about our Conduct.[284]

A pertinent point to mention here is that this is Hutcheson's definition of 'the word *Passion*' as it denotes something 'different from the Affections'. Hutcheson also observes that the word "passion" is often used to denote what *he* calls 'affections' – i.e. sensationless desires and aversions – but he himself refrains from using "passion" in this way, and instead officially reserves the word passion for the 'passionate affections' defined above.[285] This said, however, Hutcheson often uses the word 'passion' in another, distinct, sense; namely, to denote the 'violent confused sensations' that he thinks attend affections whenever such affections are 'passionate'.[286] These 'violent confused sensations' are of primary interest at present, rather than the 'passionate affections' defined as passions in the passage above. To keep things clear, I will use 'violent confused sensations'

[284] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, pp. 30-1.
[285] See here Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 30.
[286] This will become clear in the passages that follow.

for Hutcheson's latter sense of the word passion, and 'passionate affection' for the former.[287]

As regards the influence of such 'violent confused sensations' upon the will, it is notable that Hutcheson rejects the 'common' opinion that 'they are given to us as useful *Incitements* or *Spurs* to Action, by which we are roused more effectually to promote our private Good, or that of the Publick'[288]. For, as he puts it:

> What need is there for rousing us to Action, more than a *calm pure Desire* of Good, and Aversion to Evil would do, without these confused Sensations?[289]

Instead, Hutcheson argues that all 'we can expect to do in this matter',

> is only to shew, that these confused Sensations are necessary to such Natures as we are in other *respects:* Particularly that Beings of such Degrees of *Understanding,* and such *Avenues* to Knowledge as we have, must need these *additional Forces,* which we call Passions, beside the first *Sensations* by which Objects are constituted Good or Evil, and the *pure Desire* or *Aversion* arising from Opinion or Apprehension of Good or Evil.[290]

Having noted this, Hutcheson first argues that 'violent confused sensations' are given to us alongside our 'pure' desires so as to instruct us when our bodies need

[287] It is often (and rightly) observed that Hume is careless in his use of technical terminology to describe various passions, affections, sentiments, emotions, etc. It is my opinion that Hutcheson is worse. A far greater effort of attention and interpretation is required to extract Hutcheson's likely meaning than is required to extract Hume's.
[288] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 42.
[289] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 42.
[290] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 44.

nourishment – for 'to this our Reason could not extend'[291]. This being the case, however,

> When a Necessity of joining strong Sensations to one Class of Desires appears, there must appear a like Necessity of strengthning (sic) the rest by like Sensations, to keep a just Balance.[292]

In particular, Hutcheson thought that we experience 'violent confused sensations' alongside our desires for public goods so as to ensure that our natural desires for selfish pleasures do not become so strong as to threaten the survival of the species.[293] Although, this said, he also thinks that 'there are few Tempers to be found, wherein these Sensations of the several Passions are in such a *Ballance,* as in all cases to leave the Mind in a proper State, for considering the Importance of every Action or Event'[294].

All in all, then, what we find is that our 'violent confused sensations' exist so as to direct our attention towards what is necessary for our own survival and for the survival of human society. They do not exist as 'spurs to actions', because our 'pure' desires and aversions are already adequate for this purpose. This said, however, insofar as these sensations direct our attention to particular goods and evils they serve to strengthen our desires and aversions, and thus they do have some influence upon our volitional actions. Yet, importantly, the influence of 'violent confused sensations' is not upon the *will*, but upon the *understanding* (or

[291] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 45.
[292] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 45.
[293] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 45-6.
[294] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 47.

more precisely, upon our *attention*), which – as we will see – Hutcheson thinks plays an important regulatory role in determining our volitional actions. Only, this being the case, it would seem that Hutcheson is a 'metaphysician' who makes the error of reducing the influencing motives of the will to what Hume calls 'calm passions', and who affords what he calls 'violent passions' no influence upon the will.[295]

3.3. Locke and Hutcheson on Liberty

If the above analyses are accurate, then it is reasonable to believe that Hume had both Locke and Hutcheson at the forefront of his mind when speaking of the 'common error of metaphysicians'. Furthermore, it is reasonable to believe that when Hume asserts that both calm and violent passions have some influence upon the will, that he was concerned to set his position against their particular versions of this error. However, supposing this is so, we might also ask whether Hume had any reason to target Locke and Hutcheson in particular, as opposed to all 'metaphysicians' in general.

[295] It could be said that this is itself an erroneously reductive interpretation of Hutcheson's account of the influencing motives of the will, and that it is equally possible to read Hutcheson as allowing violent passions some influence over the will, alongside calm affections. Yet to make out such a reading one would have to be clear as to what one means by "violent passions". If one means what I have termed 'passionate affections', then yes, "violent passions" do determine the will. Although my point here would be that, according to Hutcheson, it is the affective element within our 'passionate affections' that determines the will to action, not the passionate element, and that since the affective element of any "violent passion" is (to Hutcheson's mind, but not Hume's) 'entirely distinct from all Sensation' (*Essay with Illustrations*, p. 30) we ought to think of it as being phenomenally calm. As such, it turns out that whichever way you cut it, Hutcheson reduces the influencing motives of the will to what Hume calls 'calm passions'. Interestingly, Hutcheson himself never uses the phrase "calm passion" or "calm passions" – only ever calm desire or calm affection. Indeed, to Hutcheson, a "calm passion" would be a contradiction in terms.

To this end, it is notable that both Locke and Hutcheson develop their theories of the influencing motives of the will alongside a theory of the 'liberty' or 'power' of 'intellectual beings' to regulate their volitional actions. Indeed this fact sets Locke and Hutcheson apart from other possible candidates for Hume's 'metaphysicians', such as Hobbes and Mandeville, who deliberately situate the volitions of man on the same plane as animal behaviour.[296] Moreover, it is notable that despite developing diametrically opposed accounts of the influencing motives of the will, both Locke and Hutcheson arrive at very similar conclusions regarding the nature of 'humane liberty', and of the use that one ought to make of this power.

So as to build a case for this claim, let us return to Locke's assertion that the 'greatest present uneasiness' determines the will to action 'for the most part', rather than 'always'[297]. Importantly, Locke's intention here is not to allow for outlier situations in which one's will is determined by something other than one's 'greatest present uneasiness'. Rather, it is Locke's belief that the will is only ever determined by the greatest present uneasiness, but that human beings retain the power to 'suspend' the determination of the will, in the face of pressing uneasiness, until the mind has thoroughly examined the object of its desire.

Locke himself puts the point like this:

[296] See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 33-4; see also Mandeville, *Honour*, pp. 5-6, 31.
[297] See here Locke, *Essay*, p. 257 (2.21.40).

> There being in us a great many uneasinesses always soliciting, and ready to determine the will, it is natural, as I have said, that the greatest and most pressing should determine the will to the next action; and so it does for the most part, but not always. For the mind having in most cases, as is evident in experience, a power to suspend the execution and satisfaction of any of its desires, and so all, one after another; is at liberty to consider the objects of them, examine them on all sides, and weigh them with others. In this lies the liberty man has; and from the not using of it right comes all that variety of mistakes, errours, and faults which we run into in the conduct of our lives, and our endeavours after happiness; whilst we precipitate the determination of our wills, and engage too soon before due examination.[298]

Crucially here, Locke understands the mind's 'power to suspend the execution and satisfaction of any of its desires' as a property that it possesses in the absence of any external force coercing its judgments as to what is good and what is evil.[299] It is Locke's opinion that such 'liberty' over one's will is 'the great privilege of finite intellectual beings' – for we share it with infinite intellectual beings – but also that this 'liberty' is not one of 'indifference', or the absence of any causal determination of the will: not even for God.[300]

Rather, Locke believes that 'every Man is put under a necessity by its constitution, as an intelligent Being, to be determined in willing by his own Thought and Judgment, what is best for him to do'[301]. Yet every man is 'free' insofar as his 'will, in every determination, follows his own judgment' rather than

[298] Locke, *Essay*, p. 263 (2.21.47).
[299] See Locke, *Essay*, p. 263-5 (2.21.47-8).
[300] See Locke, *Essay*, p. 265-7 (2.21.49-52).
[301] Locke, *Essay*, p. 264 (2.21.48).

that of another agent.[302] For, were this the case, then 'he would be under the determination of someone other than himself, which is want of Liberty'[303].

Locke regards the proper use of such 'liberty' as 'the care of our selves, that we mistake not imaginary for real happiness'[304]. This being the case, Locke thinks that we are 'obliged to suspend the satisfaction of our desires in particular cases', until we have reason to believe that the particular objects of our desires are consistent with our 'happiness in general', which is our 'real happiness'[305]. Conversely, Locke regards the abuse of 'humane liberty' as those 'wrong judgements' as to one's 'real happiness' that follow from 'a too hasty compliance with our desires'[306]. Notably here, Locke regards the hastiness of such judgments as the source of a person's moral responsibility for the 'miscarriages that follow', for it is the power to deliberate that one has abused.[307] Likewise, it is the considered use of one's power to deliberate that is the source of one's praiseworthiness for morally good actions, despite the fact that reason compels any 'rational creature' to judge that virtue is better than vice.[308]

Hutcheson adopts Locke's conception of the nature of 'humane liberty' more or less wholesale, taking into account the differences between their underlying theories of the influencing motives of the will. In particular, although Hutcheson holds that volitional actions are caused by sensationless desires towards

[302] Locke, *Essay*, p. 265 (2.21.48).
[303] Locke, *Essay*, p. 264 (2.21.48).
[304] Locke, *Essay*, p. 266 (2.21.51).
[305] Locke, *Essay*, p. 266 (2.21.51).
[306] Locke, *Essay*, p. 268 (2.21.53).
[307] See here Locke, *Essay*, p. 270-1 (2.21.56).
[308] See here Locke, *Essay*, p. 281-2 (2.21.70).

whichever object 'seems to contain the greatest moment of good', he also holds that:

> it cannot be pronounced concerning any *finite Good,* that it shall necessarily engage our Pursuit; since the Agent may possibly have the Idea of a *Greater,* or see this to be inconsistent with some *more valuable Object,* or that it may bring upon him some *prepollent Evil*.[309]

More precisely, Hutcheson asserts that when it comes to assessing the overall value of different finite goods, human beings possess a,

> Degree of Liberty about the Understanding, that tho the *highest Certainty* or *Demonstration* does necessarily engage our Assent, yet we can suspend any *absolute Conclusion* from *probable* Arguments, until we examine whether this apparent *Probability* be not opposite to *Demonstration,* or *superior Probability* on the other side.

And that:

> If this be any sort of *Liberty,* it must be allowed to be in Men, even by those who maintain the *Desire* or *Will* to be necessarily determined by the *prepollent Motive;* since this very *Presumption* may be a prepollent Motive, especially to those, who by frequent *Attention* make the Idea of the *greatest Good* always present to themselves on all important Occasions.[310]

[309] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 33.
[310] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 33.

What we find, then, is that Hutcheson's conception of mankind's 'liberty' over volitional actions is fundamentally the same as Locke's. Namely, 'liberty' is an agential power over the understanding that humans have in virtue of their capacity to reflectively compare goods – i.e. their 'intellectual' nature – and that allows them to suspend the pursuit of the particular objects of their desires until they have thoroughly examined whether they are consistent with the greatest possible good.

Hutcheson also follows Locke in his conception of the proper and improper uses of liberty. More precisely, Hutcheson holds that:

> There is one general Observation to be premised, which appears of the greatest Necessity for the just Management of all our Desires; viz. that we should, as much as possible, in all Affairs of Importance to our selves or others, prevent the Violence of their confused Sensation, and stop their Propensities from breaking out into Action, till we have fully examined the real Moment of the Object, either of our Desires or Aversions.[311]

There is a slight difference here insofar as Hutcheson's conception of the 'real moment' of good or evil in objects is calculated according to whether it promotes or detracts from general universal happiness rather than general individual happiness. Yet, this aside, Hutcheson follows Locke in holding that the 'just management' of one's desires consists in 'a fixed resolution to stop all action,

[311] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 110.

before a calm examination of every circumstance attending it'[312], while the mismanagement of one's desires consists in being 'rashly hurried into Action by their Violence, and by the confused Sensations, and fantastick Associations of Ideas which attend them'[313]. Likewise, Hutcheson follows Locke in holding that the use and abuse of our 'liberty' to deliberate over our actions is the source of a person's moral praiseworthiness and blameworthiness.[314]

At which point we can conclude that despite their differences regarding the influencing motives of the will, and the nature of true happiness, both Locke and Hutcheson share an underlying conception of 'liberty' and its proper and improper uses. This being the case, however, on the reasonable supposition that Hume had both Locke and Hutcheson in mind as 'metaphysicians' who mistakenly reduce the influencing motives of the will to either violent or calm passions, then there is reason to believe that he had both Locke and Hutcheson's experimental accounts of 'liberty' somewhere in his sights. Indeed, I will suggest below that Hume draws attention to the 'common error' of these two 'metaphysicians' as part of a broader assault on their common conception of 'liberty'.

[312] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 110.
[313] Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 111.
[314] See generally, Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, pp. 110-32.

4. Hume contra Locke and Hutcheson

4.1. Hume on the Influencing Motives of the Will

With this background in place we can turn to examine Hume's account of the influencing motives of the will, i.e. of the calm and violent passions, which he sets out across *Treatise* 2.3.4-8. Given what we have seen, there are two ways that we might go about this. We might suppose that Hume intended his account of the influencing motives of the will as a corrective to the 'common error of metaphysicians'. In particular, we might suppose that Hume sought to draw on both Locke and Hutcheson's diametrically opposed theories of the influencing motives of the will so as to provide a more empirically accurate account of the causes of volitional actions.

Hume does give some indication that he intends to do this. He says, for instance, that the 'subject' of the calm and violent passions 'belongs very properly to the present question concerning the will', and that he will 'examine it to the bottom' (T 2.3.4.1, SBN 419). This said, however, if we approach *Treatise* 2.3.4-8 looking for a theory of how both calm and violent passions come to influence the will then we will be disappointed. For while Hume gestures towards an explanation of how calm passions come to influence the will, he gives very little detail (see here T 2.3.4.1, SBN 418-9 and T 2.3.5, SBN 422-4). As such, one comes away from

Treatise 2.3.4-8 with the suspicion that Hume had no satisfactory account of how calm passions come to influence the will, but merely asserts that they do.[315]

In itself this is a fair criticism. Yet, by the same measure, we need not suppose that Hume's design for these sections was to give an account of how both calm and violent passions come to influence the will. Instead, I propose to read *Treatise* 2.3.4-8 as an attack on Locke and Hutcheson's conception of 'liberty' as a power that intellectual beings possess to suspend the determination of their will, and that they might use either well or badly.

To this end it will be useful to first give a potted summary of Hume's aims and arguments across *Treatise* 2.3.4-8. We can begin here with the opening paragraph of *Treatise* 2.3.4, where he writes:

> 'Tis evident passions influence not the will in proportion to their violence, or the disorder they occasion in the temper; but on the contrary, that when a passion has once become a settled principle of action, and is the predominant inclination of the soul, it commonly produces no longer any sensible agitation … But notwithstanding this, 'tis certain, that when we wou'd govern a man, and push him to any action, 'twill commonly be better policy to work upon the violent than the calm passions, and rather take him by his inclination, than what is vulgarly call'd his *reason*.
>
> (T 2.3.4.1, SBN 418-9)

[315] This said, for an account of how Hume might have seen things working, see John P. Wright, 'Butler and Hume on Habit and Moral Character', in *Hume and Hume's Connexions*, (eds. M.A. Stewart and John P. Wright), Edinburgh University Press, 1994, pp. 105-118.

Having made this observation, Hume then sets upon the task of explaining why we find that violent passions generally have a greater influence upon the will than calm passions do, despite the fact that the influence of such passions is not 'in proportion to their violence'.

Here Hume first asserts that both calm and violent passions lead us to 'pursue good and avoid evil' (T 2.3.4.1, SBN 419). As such, it is not the pleasantness or painfulness of their objects that determines whether any particular passion is either calm or violent. Rather, whether any particular passion is either or calm or violent, Hume thinks, 'depends upon the situation of the object' that we pursue or avoid (T 2.3.4.1, SBN 419). More precisely, Hume holds that: 'the same good, when near, will cause a violent passion, which, when remote, produces only a calm one' (T 2.3.4.1, SBN 419). Thus, generally speaking, it is proximity to one's self that determines whether any object will cause a calm or a violent passion.[316]

With this background in place, Hume then introduces three principles of human nature, which, when combined in various ways, serve to explain why passions for *proximate* objects generally have a greater influence upon the will than

[316] It is worth noting here that, according to Hume, it is not the case that all passions – whether violent or calm – lead us to pursue good and evil. Most precisely, Hume holds that the passions of pride and humility 'are pure emotions in the soul, unattended with any desire, and not immediately exciting us to action' (T 2.2.6.3, SBN 367). By contrast, love and hatred are naturally attended with benevolence and anger (respectively – see T 2.2.6, SBN 366-8) and thus do lead us to pursue good and avoid evil (with the caveat that the good and evil objects that our benevolence and anger lead us to either pursue or avoid are rendered either 'good' or 'evil' insofar as they satisfy or frustrate these passions, rather than being perceived as good or evil beforehand (see here T 2.3.9.8, SBN 439)). It is arguable that the same is true for the rest of those passions that Hume calls 'indirect' (see T 2.1.1.4, SBN 276-7), such that pride and humility are the only non-motivating passions, according to Hume (for a discussion see Radcliffe, *Hume, Passion, Action*, pp. 17-28). Yet the issue is vexed, and is, to my mind, simply one of the many questions that Hume's texts fail to provide a definitive answer to, and that this fact speaks more to Hume's generally negligent attitude towards the finer points of systematic precision, than to his having a considered position on the matter that he fails to adequately articulate.

passions for *remote* objects, and thus why we find that *violent* passions generally have a greater influence upon the will than *calm* passions do. These principles are: (1) the 'conversion' of inferior passions into superior passions when any two passions arise together (T 2.3.4, SBN 418-22); (2) the general effects of custom upon the mind (T 2.3.5, SBN 422-4); and (3) the enlivening effect of the imagination upon the passions (T 2.3.6, SBN 424-7). Hume allows that, in certain circumstances, the natural operation of these principles sees that calm passions come to overpower violent passions for influence upon the will (see here T 2.3.5, SBN 422-4). Yet, as noted above, Hume's focus across *Treatise* 2.3.4-8 is on accounting for the generally superior influence of violent passions upon the will, as opposed to calm passions.

To this end Hume makes two key claims. First, Hume argues that (a) the closer an object is to us in space and time the more our perception of it is enlivened by our ever-present and especially vivacious idea of our self (from (3) above) (see T 2.3.7.1-3, SBN 427-9). Furthermore, Hume holds that since we are accustomed to reflecting on proximate objects, and unaccustomed to reflecting on remote objects, we find it easier to focus on proximate objects than we do remote ones (from (2) above) (see T 2.3.7.6-8, SBN 430-1). This being the case, Hume draws upon both principles (3) and (2) above to conclude that the objects currently present to us naturally have a stronger effect on our will than those in the remote future, regardless of their real worth. It is for this reason, Hume thinks, that 'men are principally concern'd about those objects, which are not much remov'd in space and time, enjoying the present, and leaving what is afar off to the care of chance and fortune' (T 2.3.7.3, SBN 428).

Secondly, Hume argues that (b) we naturally have more esteem for goods that distinguish us from others than we do for goods that are common to many people, regardless of their real worth (see here T 2.3.8.4-8, SBN 433-6). The reason for this, Hume thinks, is that the 'difficulty' and 'opposition' we encounter in pursuing objects that we believe will set us 'above' others – including '[v]irtue, genius, power and riches' – serve to 'invigorate the soul', which then 'supports and fills' the passions through the conversion of inferior passions into superior passions (i.e. from principle (1) above) (see T 2.3.8.4-8, SBN 433-6). By contrast, the 'facility' with which we conceive of what we believe to be common or 'vulgar' 'weakens and enfeebles' our passions for such objects (T 2.3.8.5, SBN 434), because one of the effects of custom upon the mind is to 'destroy' our affections for otherwise pleasing objects by 'too frequent repetition' (i.e. from principle (2) above) (see here T 2.3.5.4, SBN 423).

Hume's arguments across *Treatise* 2.3.4-8 culminate with these two results – (a) and (b) – which together serve as Hume's explanation of why violent passions generally have a greater influence upon the will than calm passions do. More precisely, Hume thinks since we naturally have stronger passions for objects that are 'contiguous' to our self than we do for those that are 'remote' from our self, we find that our naturally violent passions for contiguous objects generally have a stronger influence upon the will than our naturally calm passions for remote objects do. Not only this, but amongst the objects that are contiguous to our self, we have stronger desires for those that distinguish us from others than we do for those that are possessed by the population at large. Thus we generally find that

humans are motivated by a violent desire to set themselves above the common run of mankind – through the pursuit of '[v]irtue, genius, power and riches'.[317]

4.2. Hume against Locke and Hutcheson on Liberty

With this summary in place we can now consider Hume's account of the influencing motives of the will as an attack on Locke and Hutcheson's notion of liberty. To this end, recall that both Locke and Hutcheson regard abuses of liberty to involve mistaken judgments as to the true value of objects of desire, but also that they have different opinions about what is truly valuable. For Locke the most common abuse of liberty is that of mistakenly judging one's present happiness to be of greater value than one's overall happiness – i.e. one's true happiness – such that one neglects 'the possibility of a perfect, secure, and lasting happiness' in heaven, for 'that pittance of Honour, Riches, or Pleasure' available on earth.[318] For Hutcheson, by contrast, the most common abuse of liberty is that of mistakenly judging objects of personal distinction – amongst which he includes honour, power, and wealth, but also various other 'trifles' – to be more

[317] It ought to be admitted that this is not only a 'potted' but also a *selective* summary of Hume's intentions across *Treatise* 2.3.4-8, and that my principle of selection has been to highlight elements of Hume's account of the influencing motives of the will that can be set against Locke and Hutcheson's understanding of common abuses of liberty (see section 4.2). It is my opinion that Hume's arguments across *Treatise* 2.3.4-8, and especially *Treatise* 2.3.7-8, *also* attempt to show that what Malebranche regarded as abuses of liberty are the products of *natural* principles of mind, rather than 'Original Sin' (especially our esteem for ancient 'trifles', and our desire to set ourselves above others by studying them (see here T 2.3.8, SBN 432-8 and Malebranche, *Search*, pp. 295-8)). This latter claim, however, would take more effort than it is worth to make out, as there are other reasons to think that Hume rejected Malebranche's religiously inspired conception of the will's 'liberty', and of our pervasive tendency to abuse it (see section 5, and also chapter five).

[318] Locke, *Essay*, p. 261 (2.21.44).

valuable than public happiness, which is the true good, such that one selfishly pursues personal distinction at the expense of cultivating virtue.[319]

When read against this background it seems clear that Hume's arguments for (a) and (b) are designed to show that what both Locke and Hutcheson regarded as the most common abuses of liberty can be given an alternate explanation.[320] More precisely, Hume's arguments reveal that the value judgments involved in such putative abuses of liberty arise naturally from conjunctions of the principles (1), (2), and (3), rather than from the widespread misuse of an agential 'power' to determine whether or not to assent to a value proposition. As such, what Hume's arguments show is that the voluntary actions that these value judgments commonly lead to can be explained without supposing – as Locke and Hutcheson had – that human beings possess a power to suspend their desires for particular objects, and which they have used badly.

Having come to see this, however, we can ask what motivated Hume to provide an alternative explanation for what Locke and Hutcheson had supposed were abuses of an agential power of 'liberty'. Towards this point it is notable that both

[319] See here, for instance, Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, pp. 78-83. Note that Hutcheson does not regard the excessively selfish pursuit of honours, power, and wealth (i.e. ambition) as the worst abuse of liberty, as Locke arguably does, but as the most widespread form of vicious behaviour.

[320] Clear to whom? Was this something that Hume could reasonably have expected his readers to have understood? And either way, why did he not declare that this was his agenda? These are good questions, and perhaps the best response is to say that it seems clear enough that Hume intended his readers to at least understand that his account of the influencing motives of the will was radically different from that given by either Locke or Hutcheson, and that a God-like 'liberty' over one's understanding played no role in determining our volitional actions, whether good or ill. As for why he did not announce this as his agenda, it is of no small importance that insofar as Hume rejects Locke and Hutcheson's conception of 'liberty' as a power over one's understanding, he is left with a more or less Hobbesian necessitarianism. Hume was no doubt well aware of the irreligious implications of this, and this could well have been enough of a reason to keep his intentions quiet. On this point see Russell, *Riddle*, pp. 225-38.

Locke and Hutcheson conceive of abuses of liberty as precipitated by excessively violent sensations. In particular, they both believe that excessively violent sensations interfere with our capacity to reflectively compare the values of different objects, and that this leads us to make 'hasty' value judgments that conflict with what the deliberate use of reason would suggest is best.[321] Conversely, both Locke and Hutcheson believe that 'command' over such excessively violent sensations is achieved by attentive deliberation as to the true value of objects. In Locke's case such deliberation leads to the diminishing of the violence of our desires for what we reflectively judge to be imaginary, rather than real, goods.[322] Whereas for Hutcheson such deliberation serves to strengthen our 'calm pure affections' for true goods, such that they can overpower any 'passionate affections' for imaginary goods.[323]

If we turn to Hume's account of these matters, however, we get a very different story. For while Hume thinks that we can explain why '[g]enerally speaking, the violent passions have a more powerful influence upon the will' (T 2.3.8.13, SBN 437); and also why 'the calm ones, when corroborated by reflection, and seconded by resolution, are able to controul them in their most furious movements' (T 2.3.8.13, SBN 437-8); he nevertheless thinks that we *cannot* explain why individual persons act from violent passions against what the deliberate use of their reason would suggest is best (see T 2.3.8.13, SBN 437-8 and also T 2.3.3.10, SBN 418). The reason for this, according to Hume, is that whether any person acts from a violent passion for an immediate good, or from a

[321] See here Locke, *Essay*, pp. 270-81 (2.21.56-69) and Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, pp. 110-11.
[322] See Locke, *Essay*, pp. 260-3 (2.21.44-6).
[323] See Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 32.

calm passion for a good that they have reflectively endorsed, is 'pretty variable, and depend[s], in great measure, on the peculiar temper and disposition of every individual' (T 2.3.8.13, SBN 437). Notably, Hume takes this to include those persons whose 'general character' is that they reliably subordinate their violent passions to their calm passions. For '[w]hat we call strength of mind, implies the prevalence of the calm passions above the violent; tho' we may easily observe, there is no man so constantly possess'd of this virtue, as never on any occasion to yield to the sollicitations of passion and desire' (T 2.3.3.10, SBN 418).

Not only this, but:

> [w]hat makes this whole affair more uncertain, is, that a calm passion may easily be chang'd into a violent one, either by a change of temper, or of the circumstances and situation of the object, as by the borrowing of force from any attendant passion, by custom, or by exciting the imagination.
>
> (T 2.3.8.13, SBN 438)

As such, Hume's ultimate conclusion is that when it comes to the so-called 'struggle of passion and of reason',

> Philosophy can only account for a few of the greater and more sensible events of this war; but must leave all the smaller and more delicate revolutions, as dependent on principles too fine and minute for her comprehension.
>
> (T 2.3.8.13, SBN 438)

This is to say, in other words, that while philosophers may be able to explain the general causes of conflict between violent passions for immediate goods and calm passions for what the deliberate use of reason would suggest is best, it is beyond the capacity of philosophers to explain why this happens in any individual case. Instead philosophers must simply accept that these more 'delicate revolutions' of passion against "reason" are what 'diversifies human life, and makes men so different not only from each other, but also from themselves in different times' (T 2.3.8.13, SBN 438).

So far as this is a good reading of Hume's designs across *Treatise* 2.3.4-8, then Hume's overall point cuts deeper than merely showing that what both Locke and Hutcheson regarded as abuses of liberty can be given an alternate explanation. Rather, what Hume's arguments ultimately reveal is that Locke and Hutcheson's purportedly experimental hypothesis that human beings possess the agency to self-regulate their volitional actions on account of their 'intellectual' nature *cannot* be justified by appeal to experience. For what we find is that the determining factors of volitional actions are 'pretty variable' in each individual case, so variable, in fact, that it is impossible for observers to form justified conclusions as to the precise principles that cause any particular person to act against what the deliberate use of their reason would suggest is the best thing to do.[324]

[324] Towards this point, it is that notable that Hume regards experimental moral philosophy as being at a 'peculiar disadvantage' as compared to experimental natural philosophy, 'that in collecting its experiments, it cannot make them purposively, with premeditation, and after such a manner as to satisfy itself concerning every particular difficulty which may arise' (T *Intro*, SBN xviii-xix). For, Hume says, '[w]hen I am at a loss to know the effects of one body upon another in any situation, I need only put them in that situation, and observe what results from it. But should I endeavour to clear up after the same manner any doubt in moral philosophy, by

5. Conclusion

My aim in the above has been to give an account of Hume's intentions across *Treatise* 2.3.4-8. I have argued that in these sections Hume targets Locke and Hutcheson's shared conception of 'liberty' as an agential power over the understanding that humans have in virtue of their 'intellectual' nature, and that allows individual agents to suspend the volitional pursuit of the objects of their desires. More precisely, I have argued that, taken as a whole, *Treatise* 2.3.4-8 is an attempt to show that Locke and Hutcheson's conception of 'liberty' is not only not necessary to explain their target phenomena (namely, widespread abuses of liberty), but *cannot* be justified by appeal to experience. By way of conclusion, I will briefly consider the role of these sections within Hume's account of the will as a whole, that is, across *Treatise* 2.3.1-8.

To this end we can return to Hume's claim that a 'full understanding' of the 'nature and properties' of the will is 'necessary' to the explanation of the passions (T 2.3.1.2, SBN 399). At the outset I argued that whatever else Hume meant here he must have meant that a full understanding of the will was necessary to explain the effects of the passions, and that his arguments against 'free-will' (T 2.3.1-2, SBN 399-412) and against the motivating power of reason

placing myself in the same case with that which I consider, 'tis evident this reflection and premeditation would so disturb the operation of my natural principles, as must render it impossible to form any just conclusion from the phenomenon' (T *Intro*, SBN xix). The case of a person acting against what the deliberate use of reason would lead them to believe is best would seem to be an instance of the very problem that Hume describes here, which suggests that he saw 'the great difficulty of deciding concerning the actions and resolutions of men, where there is any contrariety of motives and passions' (T 2.3.3.10, SBN 418) as arising from the limits of the experimental method of reasoning, as applied to moral philosophy.

(T 2.3.3, SBN 413-8) can be seen as clearing the way for a general account of the effects of the passions upon the will. However, now that we have developed a detailed account of Hume's designs in *Treatise* 2.3.4-8, we can consider a further aspect of his arguments across *Treatise* 2.3.1-3.

Namely, it would appear that Hume also intended his attacks upon 'free-will' and upon the motivating power of reason to dispense with the belief that our moral nature is tied to an essential difference between human nature and animal nature. This is clearest with regard to Hume's arguments against the motivating power of reason in *Treatise* 2.3.3. Here Hume explicitly asserts that 'the greatest part of moral philosophy,' since ancient times, has been 'founded' on the belief that 'rational creatures' are 'oblig'd to regulate [their] actions by reason', and that 'men are only so far virtuous as they conform themselves to its [i.e. reason's] dictates' (T 2.3.3.1, SBN 413). A corollary of these claims, unstated but implied, is that mankind's moral nature is tied to man's status as a 'rational creature', and thus to an essential difference between human beings and animals *qua* non-rational creatures.

The same applies to Hume's arguments against 'liberty or free-will', or the doctrine that mankind's volitional actions are *un*caused. For, after having argued that this conception of 'free-will' is 'directly contrary to experience' (T 2.3.1.18, SBN 407), Hume argues that the 'doctrine of liberty' continues to prevail against the 'doctrine of necessity' because of '*religion*, which has been very unnecessarily interested in this question' (T 2.3.2.3-8, SBN 409-12). Hume does not go into specifics (at least not in the *Treatise*), but it is clear that his target is the religious

belief that a person's moral blameworthiness for their actions is tied to a 'free' *qua* uncaused choice to act contrary to 'divine laws' – which is to say, contrary to the will of God – while a person's moral merit consists in their 'free' qua uncaused choice to conform their will to God's will.[325] So far as this is the case, we find that Hume's attack on 'free-will' at *Treatise* 2.3.1-2 is an attack on the religious belief that mankind's moral nature is tied to an essential difference between man and animals, namely, to our possessing a God-like 'free-will', which we may choose to use for good or evil.

Both Locke and Hutcheson reject the ancient and religious forms of the belief that mankind's moral nature is tied to an essential difference between man and animals. At the same time, however, their shared conception of 'humane liberty' effectively serves to re-state this belief in an experimental guise. In particular, both Locke and Hutcheson hold that man's 'intellectual' nature affords human beings a 'liberty' over their volitional actions that other finite creatures lack, and that an individual's 'power' to suspend the actions of their will until they have thoroughly examined the value of the objects of their desires is the source of that person's moral nature. Moreover, both Locke and Hutcheson hold this to be something that is obvious from everyone's experience of performing volitional actions.[326]

[325] When Hume recasts *Treatise* 2.3.1-2 in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), he makes it clear that his target is the "free-will defence" to the "problem of evil". See Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, pp. 88-91 (8.32-6). I see no reason to think that this was a new target, but that this was Hume's intended target in the *Treatise* as well.

[326] See here Locke, *Essay*, p. 263 (2.21.47) and Hutcheson, *Essay with Illustrations*, p. 15.

Against this background, it would seem that the function of *Treatise* 2.3.4-8 within Hume's overall account of the will is to dispense with Locke and Hutcheson's experimental version of the general philosophical fallacy that mankind's moral nature is tied to an essential difference between man and animals. For what Hume's arguments in these sections show, or at least purport to show, is that it is impossible to observe the precise principles that cause any individual person to have the specific moral nature that they do: because such principles are 'too fine and minute for philosophy to comprehend'. This being case, even those moral philosophers who defer only to the cautious study of experience must give up on the idea that our moral nature can be traced back to a principle of action that separates us from beasts. Instead, such 'experimental' moral philosophers – indeed all philosophers – must content themselves with an account of the will that draws no essential distinction between the causes of mankind's moral actions, good or bad, and the causes of animal behaviour.

5. A Curious Conclusion

1. Introduction

Hume concludes Book Two Part Three – and thus Book Two as a whole – with a section titled '*Of curiosity, or the love of truth*'. When first introducing this passion, Hume is keen to make clear that it stands apart from the other passions that he has examined in Book Two. Indeed curiosity is 'an affection of so peculiar a kind', Hume says, 'that t'woud have been impossible to have treated of it under any of those heads, which we have examin'd, without danger of obscurity and confusion' (T 2.3.10.1, SBN 448). As such, Hume's treatment of curiosity sits curiously apart from not only the titular topics of Book Two Part Three – i.e. the will and direct passions – but also from the 'indirect' passions as well; indeed, it is tempting to see Hume's account of curiosity as the culmination of his arguments across the whole of Book Two. Such that Hume's complicated system of the passions, with its novel division into the 'direct' and 'indirect' passions, can be seen as paving the way for a novel account of what Hume calls 'the love of truth'.

It is something of an anticlimax, then, that Hume begins his discussion of curiosity by admitting that he has been 'not a little inattentive' to 'examine so many passions',

> without taking once into the consideration that love of truth, which was the first source of all our enquiries. 'Twill therefore be proper, before we leave this subject, to bestow a few reflections upon that passion, and shew its origin in human nature.
>
> (T 2.3.10.1, SBN 448)

That Hume says curiosity was the 'first source' of his enquiries alludes to the concluding passages of Book One. There Hume had claimed that, despite having raised serious sceptical doubts as to his ability to justify his conclusions, he still found himself 'naturally *inclin'd*' to enter into philosophical disputes, as he could not 'forbear having a curiosity' to discover the principles of human nature (T 1.4.7.12, SBN 270-1). In light of these earlier claims, and Hume's allusion back to them, it would seem that Hume places an account of curiosity at the conclusion of Book Two so as to supplement our understanding of his return to philosophy at the conclusion of Book One.[327]

[327] Schafer (2013) forwards a strong form of this thesis. Schafer reads Hume as a virtue epistemologist for whom good qua justified reasoning is reasoning that satisfies curiosity, thus Hume's final epistemological position at the end of Book One cannot be adequately understood without considering his account of curiosity at the end of Book Two (see especially pp. 16-20). I do not find Schafer's view very plausible, much closer to the mark is Garrett's (2015) claim that the 'structural pride of place' afforded to curiosity is a sign that this passion is of special importance to Hume, and that this is 'entirely appropriate' given the role that this passion had played in his return to philosophy at the end of Book One (pp. 154-5). For while it seems reasonable to suppose that Hume intended there to be a substantive connection between his account of the origin of curiosity in human nature and the epistemological value attached to philosophical reasoning by those who practice it, it is not at all clear that Hume's account of curiosity is able to resolve the skeptical problems that Hume raises in the conclusion to Book One – whether he intended it to do so or not.

Yet, by the same measure, when Hume speaks of curiosity as being the 'first source of our enquires' he is speaking in the plural. Thus it is not just his own philosophising that he understands as being motivated by curiosity, but also that of his readers. On this conception of Hume's intentions, his placement of an account of curiosity at the end of Book Two aims primarily at self-understanding – for both Hume himself and his readers – and if it elucidates his arguments in the conclusion to Book One of the *Treatise* then this is a bonus.[328]

Indeed there is a further feature of the placement of '*Of curiosity*' at the end of Book Two that is that is just as striking, if not more so, than any parallel between the conclusions to Books One and Two. In particular, it is notable that Hume concludes Part One of Book Two, titled '*Of pride and humility*', with the section '*Of the pride and humility of animals*'. Likewise, he concludes Part Two of Book Two, titled '*Of love and hatred*', with the section '*Of the love and hatred of animals*'. By contrast, the third and final part of Book Two, '*Of the will and direct passions*', ends with Hume deciding to 'wave (sic) the examination of the will and direct passions, as they appear in animals; since nothing is more evident, than that they are of the same nature, and excited by the same causes as in human creatures' (T 2.3.9.32, SBN 448). Instead, as noted, Hume caps off Part Three of Book Two with an account '*Of curiosity, or the love of truth*'. What this suggests, however, is that Hume regarded curiosity as a passion without an analogue in the animal world.

This is not surprising. For while the passion of curiosity was not universally admired amongst philosophers – as we will see – it was nevertheless standard

[328] Gelfert (2013) opts for a similar line.

for philosophers to believe that the passion of curiosity set human beings apart from animals, for better or worse. This said, while it might not be surprising that Hume too thought that curiosity set us apart from animals, it does raise the question as to what he intended for his account of the origin of curiosity in human nature, in light of the commonplace belief that curiosity is unique to human beings.

In what follows I offer an answer to this question. To this end I first give an overview of Hume's account of the origin of curiosity, or more precisely, of what he calls 'the love of knowledge, as it displays itself in the sciences' (Section 2). Here I argue that Hume was concerned to reject two different positions on the origin of curiosity in human nature, which I then go on to outline in detail (Section 3).

The first of these positions is that curiosity is an innate appetite for knowledge that marks an essential difference between human beings and animals. Many ancient philosophers had held this position, as well as a number of Hume's contemporaries, but I take Hobbes as its exemplar, since Hobbes sets it out more explicitly than any of Hume's immediate precursors. The second position is that curiosity, as we commonly find it, is a vicious desire to demonstrate one's intellectual prowess, as opposed to a virtuous love of wisdom that renders one divine. On this broadly Augustinian picture, our curiosity is not a mark of our superiority over animals, but of mankind's inferiority to divine nature. This position was also common amongst Hume's contemporaries, even those with relatively subdued religious agendas, yet I take Malebranche as its exemplar,

given that Malebranche's commitment to this position is more explicit than anything found in Hume's more secular contemporaries.

Having argued for this conjecture regarding Hume's target beliefs, I then return to Hume's account of curiosity (Section 4). I argue that Hume's account of curiosity can be read as an attempt to give an impartial account of the origin of curiosity in human nature by dispensing with these two philosophical prejudices. More precisely, I claim that Hume attempts to show (1) that the origin of curiosity is not an innate love of truth but an innate love of entertainment that is common to man and beast, thus there is no reason to suppose that curiosity marks an essential difference between human and animal natures; and (2) that a vicious love of truth arises from the very same principles as the virtuous love of truth, thus there is no reason to suppose that curiosity, as we commonly find it, is evidence of the corruption of human nature vis-à-vis divine nature. In doing so, Hume neither flatters human nature, vis-à-vis animals, nor debases human nature, vis-à-vis God, and thus his account of the origin of curiosity has a genuine claim to impartiality. I then conclude by suggesting that, in this way, Hume intended his account of curiosity to supplement our understanding of the conclusion to Book One, Part Three, '*Of the Reason of Animals*'.

2. Hume's Account of Curiosity: An Overview

Hume's account of curiosity has two parts. The first part, which will be of primary interest to us, gives an account of what he calls 'the love of knowledge, which displays itself in the sciences' (T 2.3.10.11, SBN 453). The second part,

which is only of interest as a point of comparison, gives an account of what he calls 'a certain curiosity implanted in human nature, which is a passion deriv'd from a quite different principle' (T 2.3.10.11, SBN 453). As Hume's description of this second type of curiosity suggests, these two species of curiosity have causally distinct origins in human nature (i.e. they are derived from 'quite different' principles).

More precisely, Hume holds that the second type of curiosity is 'an ardent desire of clearing up any doubt or difficulty' regarding any 'matter of fact' that we either have 'an interest to know', or that the idea of which 'strikes upon us with such force, and concerns us so nearly, as to give us an uneasiness' (T 2.3.10.12, SBN 453-4). In such cases the formation of true beliefs regarding the relevant matters of fact serves to counter the painful 'hesitation and uncertainty' that we experience, and thus we desire to discover such truths for their pleasing ameliorative effect (T 2.3.10.12, SBN 453-4). By contrast, 'the love of knowledge, which displays itself in the sciences', is a love of discovering not only matters of fact, but also 'proportions of ideas' (T 2.3.10.2, SBN 448-9), and it is independent of any 'interest' we have in knowing such truths, including that of ameliorating the 'uneasiness' that our doubts about them may cause us (see: T 2.3.10.7, SBN 451). This is to say, in other words, that 'the love of knowledge, which displays itself in the sciences' is a love of truth as an end in itself, rather than as a means to some other end.

Only, this being the case, we might wonder how it is that scientific curiosity arises in human beings, given that it is not a desire for the pleasing consequences

of discovering truths. One possibility here is that the origin of our scientific curiosity is inexplicable, or that our love of knowledge is an instinctual propensity towards the discovery of truth that is 'implanted' in human nature; in much the same way that Hume understands hunger and lust to be 'perfectly unaccountable' 'natural impulses' towards fixed objects, that have been implanted in human nature (see: T 2.3.9.8, SBN 439). This conception of scientific curiosity would explain why we find the discovery of demonstrative and probable truths to be something that is pleasing for its own sake, rather than as a means to some other end. Yet it would also mean that scientific curiosity is simply an impulse towards the discovery of demonstrative and probable truths that we find ourselves saddled with, and that we cannot give any explanation of.

Should one think this, however, then one would be wrong, at least according to Hume. For Hume opens his arguments at *Treatise* 2.3.10 with the claim that when it comes to demonstrative truths, or 'the discovery of proportions of ideas',

> 'Tis certain, that [this] species of truth, is not desir'd merely as truth, and that 'tis not the justness of our conclusions, which alone gives the pleasure. For these conclusions are equally just, when we discover the equality of two bodies by a pair of compasses, as when we learn it by a mathematical demonstration; and tho' in the one case the proofs be demonstrative, and in the other only sensible, yet generally speaking, the mind acquiesces with equal assurance in the one as in the other. And in an arithmetical operation, where both the truth and the assurance are of the same nature, as in the most profound algebraical problem, the pleasure is very inconsiderable, if rather it does not degenerate into pain: Which is an evident proof,

> that the satisfaction, which we sometimes receive from the discovery of truth, proceeds not from it, merely as such, but only as endow'd with certain qualities.
>
> (T 2.3.10.2, SBN 448-9)

Hume's reasoning here is not his clearest, yet his point would seem to be that we rest assured of the truth of our conclusions (we 'acquiesce' in them) – both demonstrative and probable (demonstrative and 'sensible') – insofar as we believe that our reasoning is 'just'. For, whatever it is that Hume thinks 'the justness of our conclusions' consists in, just reasoning is the best that we can hope to achieve in the search after truth. Yet it turns out that there are certain types of just reasoning which we find to be painful, such as the performance of 'arithmetical' operations. This being the case, even if we find that the 'justness of our conclusions' makes up *some* part of the pleasure of having discovered a truth – as it does when we are able to solve 'the most profound algebraical problem' – it is not our *merely* having reasoned justly that pleases us when we discover such a truth. Rather, our reasoning must be 'endow'd with certain qualities' before we come to find the discovery of truth to be pleasant.

Having dismissed the thought that scientific curiosity is an innate desire to discover truths, 'merely as such', Hume then attempts to give an alternate account of the origin of 'the love of knowledge, as it displays itself in the sciences'. I will return to discuss the finer points of Hume's theory in Section 4. At present, however, I am more concerned to give a general overview of his argument; beginning with his attempt to discern those 'certain qualities' that our

reasoning must be 'endow'd with' before the discovery of truth becomes pleasing.

To this end, Hume asserts that the 'most considerable circumstance requisite to render truth agreeable' is 'the genius and capacity, which is employ'd in its invention and discovery' (T 2.3.10.3, SBN 449). Towards this point, Hume holds that:

> What is easy and obvious is never valu'd; and even what is *in itself* difficult, if we come to the knowledge of it without difficulty, and without any stretch of thought or judgment, is but little regarded.
>
> (T 2.3.10.3, SBN 449)

Instead Hume holds that it is *only* when we are 'oblig'd' to 'exert our genius' in the discovery of a truth that we find its discovery to be pleasing (T 2.3.10.3, SBN 449). That is, it is only when we must overcome some sort of difficulty to acquire the knowledge of a truth that we find it pleasing to discover (see also: T 2.3.8.9, SBN 435-6). However, this being the case, could it be that the love of truth is a desire to exercise one's genius in the discovery of truths, such that exercise of one's genius is not only necessary but *sufficient* to make the discovery of a truth pleasing?

Here too one would be wrong, at least according to Hume. For, while he believes that the exercise of genius makes up a significant portion of the pleasure of discovering truths, he proceeds to observe that:

> But tho' the exercise of genius be the principal source of that satisfaction we receive from the sciences, yet I doubt, if it be alone sufficient to give us any considerable enjoyment. The truth we discover must also be of some importance. 'Tis easy to multiply algebraical problems to infinity, nor is there any end in the discovery of the proportions of conic sections; tho' few mathematicians take any pleasure in these researches, but turn their thoughts to what is more useful and important.
>
> (T 2.3.10.4, SBN 449-50)

Here Hume's point would seem to be that if the exercise of genius 'alone' were sufficient to satisfy our scientific curiosity, then curious persons would pursue the discovery of truths that they acknowledge to be of little importance or utility, yet are still difficult to prove, simply so as to exercise their genius in the discovery of such truths; whether for its own sake as a pleasing exercise of the mind, or so as to win the esteem of others for their intellectual prowess. Yet we do not find this to be the case – at least not often. As such, Hume concludes that persons who are motivated by curiosity must regard the truths that they pursue to be 'useful and important' before they will take any 'considerable enjoyment' in discovering them.

With this observation in place, Hume then sets himself the question: 'after what manner this utility and importance operate upon us' (T 2.3.10.4, SBN 450), such that curious persons only take significant pleasure in exerting their genius in the discovery of what they regard as 'useful and important' truths? Having set himself this question, Hume immediately runs into what he calls a 'difficulty', a

difficulty which will itself require the exertion of his genius to overcome (see: T 2.3.10.4, SBN 450). I will examine this difficulty and Hume's attempt to resolve it in Section 4. For now, however, we need only note that Hume answers his question by asserting that we recognise the 'utility and importance' of any truth through a 'sympathy' with 'the interests of mankind' (T 2.3.10.4-5, SBN 449-50). Such a sympathy, Hume thinks, is 'requisite to fix our attention' on certain truths, rather than others, and that *this* is what makes our exerting our genius in their discovery so pleasant: for '[w]hen we are careless and inattentive, the same action of the understanding has no effect upon us' (T 2.3.10.6, SBN 451). Thus it turns out that a 'sympathy' with the 'interest of mankind' is a necessary component in the origin of curiosity, alongside the desire to exercise one's genius.[329]

Having thus accounted for the 'manner' in which the notions of utility and importance 'operate upon' our curiosity, Hume has an all-but-complete account of the origin of 'the love of knowledge, as it displays itself in the sciences'. There is, however, one last point in need of explaining. In particular, it follows from the above that to exert one's genius in the discovery of a useful and important truth is sufficient to satisfy one's scientific curiosity, without being assured of one's success. Indeed, it is conceivable that one could rest satisfied with reasoning that

[329] Hume observes that the sympathy with the interests of mankind that he has mind here is quite 'remote' and that 'it may be objected, that such a remote sympathy is a very slight foundation for a passion, and that so much industry and application, as we frequently observe in philosophers, can never be deriv'd from so inconsiderable an original' (T 2.3.10.6, SBN 450). I will address this point in Section 4, but it is worth remarking here that earlier in Book Two Hume had said that '[w]hatever … passions we may be actuated by; pride, ambition, avarice, curiosity, lust; the soul or animating principle of them all is sympathy; nor would they have any force, were we to abstract entirely from the thoughts and sentiments of others' (T 2.2.5.15, SBN 363). As such, it would seem that Hume regards sympathy 'with the thoughts and sentiments of others' as playing a key role in the production of curiosity, even if such sympathy is rather 'remote'.

one suspects to be erroneous, so long as it is ingenious, and appears to have produced a useful and important truth. This, however, is not how Hume thinks scientific curiosity works, and this being the case, he must still explain why 'there is likewise requir'd a degree of success in the attainment of the end, or the discovery of the truth that we examine' (T 2.3.10.7, SBN 451).

To this end, Hume makes what he calls a 'general remark', which he hopes will be 'useful on many occasions', '*viz*.'

> that where the mind pursues any end with passion; tho' that passion be not deriv'd originally from that end, but merely from the action and pursuit; yet by the natural course of the affections, we acquire a concern for the end itself, and are uneasy under any disappointment we meet with in the pursuit of it.
>
> (T 2.3.10.7, SBN 451)

This remark is indeed very general, and much could be made of it. What is important to note, however, is that, according to Hume, our curiosity is not 'deriv'd originally' from the object of our curiosity, which is to say, from those 'useful and important' truths that we pursue from curiosity. Instead, our curiosity is 'deriv'd' from 'the action and pursuit' of such objects, i.e. from the exertion of our genius in the pursuit of useful and important truths. This said, however, Hume thinks that through the ingenious pursuit of such truths we naturally come to 'acquire a concern' for truth 'itself'. That is, a concern for truth that is independent of the pleasure of exerting our genius, and even of the utility or importance that we accord to the truths that we pursue. It is for *this* reason,

Hume thinks, that we *require* at least some 'degree of success in … the discovery of the truth that we examine'. This to say, in other words, that we require of ourselves that our reasoning be 'just'; because the activity of searching after truth leads to our becoming interested in discovering truth as an end in itself, an interest that is only satisfied when we are assured of 'the justness of our conclusions'.

At which point Hume has given a complete account of the origin of scientific curiosity in human nature. That is, of our love of truth as an end in itself, rather than as a means to some other end. And while the summary that I have given leaves out some important arguments, we can still draw a preliminary conclusion regarding Hume's overall designs. Namely, it would seem that Hume was concerned to reject two different explanations of the origin of this passion in human nature. The first is that 'the love of knowledge, as it displays itself in the sciences' is an innate desire for truth 'merely as truth': such that 'the justness of our conclusions' is *sufficient* to cause the pleasure we take in the discovery of truth. The second is that scientific curiosity is *simply* a desire to exercise one's genius in the discovery of truth, such that the exercise of one's genius is not only necessary (as Hume thinks) but *sufficient* to cause the pleasure we take in 'the sciences'. Instead it is Hume's opinion that scientific curiosity arises from a combination of different principles of human nature – of which we are yet to discuss in detail – and thus that the pleasure we take in the discovery of truth has a complicated aetiology.

3. Hume's Target Beliefs regarding the Origin of Curiosity

Having come to see that Hume's account of curiosity targets these two explanations of the origin of curiosity, we can ask why it was that Hume chose to target them. For while it is obvious that Hume was looking to develop an account of the love of knowledge that was true to experience, or at least to his own experience, it is also clear that he thought the two above explanations of scientific curiosity could not be justified by experience, and thus that they ought to be rejected. Where then had Hume encountered these positions, and what were they thought to reveal about human nature?

3.1 Hobbes on 'Curiosity'

It is not difficult to find an advocate of the first position – that the love of truth is an innate desire to know. Indeed, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* famously begins with the assertion that '[a]ll men by nature desire to know', and that this is a desire for knowledge as an end in itself.[330] More pertinent, however, is that the notion that human beings possess an innate desire for *new* knowledge was in vogue amongst those of Hume's contemporaries looking to break with the scholastic tradition in the natural and moral sciences.[331] And amongst such philosophers, Hobbes paid closer attention to this desire than most.[332] As such, we can get a

[330] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. Translated by C. D. C. Reeve. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2016, p. 2.
[331] See here Lorraine Datson and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750*. New York: Zone Books, 1998, pp. 311-16.
[332] Datson and Park, *Wonders*, p. 307.

good sense of the background to Hume's arguments by examining Hobbes' conception of curiosity, or what he calls the 'appetite of knowledge'[333].

Most precisely, Hobbes held that curiosity was the appetitive form of 'admiration', which itself was the 'hope and expectation of future knowledge from anything that happeneth new and strange'[334]. Furthermore, Hobbes held that:

> As in the discerning faculties, man leaveth all community with beasts at the faculty of imposing names; so also doth he surmount their nature at this passion of curiosity. For when a beast seeth anything new or strange to him, he considereth it so far only as to discern whether it be likely to serve his turn, or hurt him … whereas man, who in most events remembereth in what manner they were caused and begun, looketh for the cause and beginning of everything that ariseth new unto him … And from this beginning is derived all philosophy: as astronomy from the admiration of the course of heaven; natural philosophy from the strange effects of the elements and other bodies.[335]

The key point to note in this passage is that, according to Hobbes, what marks human beings out as curious creatures is that they 'looketh for the cause and beginning of everything that ariseth new': whereas animals, by contrast, only consider the causes of novelties to the extent that they are 'likely to serve [their] turn, or hurt [them]'. This is to say that, unlike animals, human beings are

[333] Thomas Hobbes, *Human Nature: Or the Fundamental Elements of Policy*. Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1994, p. 50.
[334] Hobbes, *Human Nature*, p. 50.
[335] Hobbes, *Human Nature*, pp. 50-1.

prompted by curiosity to consider the causes of novelties even when they have no use for such knowledge. Indeed, Hobbes thinks that persons with more curiosity are distinguished from those with less by the fact that they will study 'strange accidents' merely to know their causes; whereas more 'sensual' humans only care to know the causes of such things if it serves their interests: 'for to a man in the chase of riches or authority, (which in respect of knowledge are but sensuality) it is a diversion of little pleasure to consider, whether it be the motion of the sun or the earth that maketh the day, or to enter into other contemplation of any strange accident, than whether it conduce or not to the end he pursueth'[336].

What we find, then, is that Hobbes regards curiosity as an appetite for knowledge for its own sake, rather than as a means of furthering one's interests. Not only this, but Hobbes describes curiosity as 'a lust of the mind that by a perseverance of delight in the continual and indefatigable generation of knowledge exceedeth the short vehemence of any carnal pleasure'[337]. As such, we might also say that Hobbes had a view of curiosity on which it is not necessary to have discovered an especially difficult or important truth in order to find the discovery of truth pleasing, but rather that simply 'generating' knowledge is *sufficient* to delight us. This being the case, it would seem that Hobbes held a version of the "innate desire for truth" position very much like the one that Hume was concerned to reject.

[336] Hobbes, *Human Nature*, p. 51.
[337] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. Ed. Edwin Curley. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994, p. 31.

This is not to say, to be clear, that Hobbes placed no value on the discovery of especially difficult truths. Indeed Hobbes thought that we place a high value on those truths that 'by the rarity of their invention' set us apart from others as having the 'intellectual virtue' of 'discretion' or 'good judgment'[338]. The key point, rather, is that Hobbes thought we find the discovery of such truths to be valuable *both* for their own sake, i.e. insofar as they satisfy our curiosity, *and* insofar as our knowledge of them is a form of power over others, i.e. as they satisfy our ambition. Indeed, Hobbes draws special attention to the close connection between curiosity and ambition, writing that we receive an especially great pleasure from searching after truths that we believe could serve to increase our power: 'For in such case [we] stand affected with the hope that all gamesters have while the cards are shuffling'[339].

Insofar as Hobbes held this conception of curiosity he can be seen to hold the traditional view that philosophy begins in wonder and is sustained by man's innate desire to know the causes of things, simply as such, rather than for any other end. In this regard, Hobbes was no different to Descartes, or Aristotle, despite the differences in their views as to how we acquire knowledge of causes.[340] Moreover, Hobbes, like many others, was committed to the view that mankind's desire to know marks an *essential* difference between human nature and animal nature, and indeed that this passion marks mankind out as having a *superior* nature to animals. For it is through our curiosity that man 'doth

[338] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 38-9.
[339] Hobbes, *Human Nature*, p. 51.
[340] On Descartes, see René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul.* Translated by Stephen H. Voss. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989, pp. 56-9; for Aristotle, see *Metaphysics*, pp. 5-6.

surmount [animal] nature' and 'leaveth all community with beasts'[341]. To this extent, however, insofar as Hume can be seen to reject Hobbes' conception of curiosity, he can be seen to reject – or to at least call into question – the commonplace philosophical belief that the passion of curiosity marks out human nature as essentially superior to animal nature.

3.2. Malebranche on the 'Desire to Appear Learned'

If Hobbes' conception of curiosity represents the first of Hume's target beliefs, whose conception of curiosity might best represent the other: that the desire to know is a desire to exercise one's genius in the discovery of truths? Unlike with Hume's first target belief, it is difficult to find a philosopher who genuinely held that the love of truth is *simply* a love of exercising one's genius in the discovery of truths, such that even the discovery of useless and trifling truths is satisfying if only one's reasoning in doing so is ingenious. At the same time, however, it was common for philosophers of Hume's acquaintance to criticise other philosophers for their pursuit of difficult yet useless truths, simply as a means of satisfying their vanity. And of these, the best representative is Malebranche, who was not only widely read, but whose basic position on this point was common to a number of Hume's more immediate contemporaries.

Malebranche's clearest statement on the nature and vicissitudes of curiosity is his claim that:

[341] Hobbes, *Human Nature*, p. 50.

> All men naturally desire to know, for all minds are created for the truth; but the desire to know, as perfectly correct and rational as it is in itself, often becomes a very dangerous vice through the false judgments that accompany it. Curiosity often tempts the mind with vain objects for its meditations and often attaches to these ideas false ideas of greatness; it enhances them with the deceptive luster of rarity and represents them so attractively that we have difficulty contemplating them without excessive pleasure and attachment.[342]

An important point to note in this passage is that Malebranche regards curiosity or 'the desire to know' as 'perfectly correct and rational' when considered 'in itself'. This aspect of Malebranche's thinking on curiosity reflects his belief that the human mind is 'immediately joined' to God – who *is* truth – and that the mind of man, as one of God's creations, is impressed with a 'never-ceasing' 'love of the good in general' that resembles God's love for Himself *as* the good in general.[343] This being the case, our 'desire to know' is 'perfectly correct and rational', 'in itself', because what this desire *is* is a love of God *as* truth, and thus *as* the good in general, and hence it resembles (to some degree) God's love of Himself as the good in general.

This said, however, Malebranche also thinks that curiosity 'often tempts the mind' by presenting 'vain objects' for contemplation as if they were important. The reason for this, according to Malebranche, is that the mind of man has been corrupted by 'Original Sin', which has reduced the soul to 'the slave of body' and has lead us to associate 'false ideas of greatness' with objects that ought to be

[342] Nicholas Malebranche, *The Search After Truth*. Translated by T. Lennon and P. Olscamp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 400.
[343] See here Malebranche, *Search*, p. xxxiii; pp. 265-8.

despised as useless, and to erroneously despise those that are useful.[344] As such, we find that philosophers neglect the moral sciences, which are those most useful to them, but will 'spend whole nights hanging from a telescope in order to discover some spot or some new planet in the sky'[345]. Such pursuits, Malebranche thinks, are patently of no or little utility, and ought to be thought of as such, yet there is still no shortage of philosophers who are prepared to 'ruin [their] health and lose [their] wealth … in order to pay regular visits to the stars'[346]. To Malebranche's mind, this is simply evidence that philosophers have lost sight of the real use and importance of their objects of study, and now merely act from a vain 'desire to appear learned'[347].

Indeed, Malebranche thinks that the 'desire to appear learned' characterises the entire 'Republic of Letters'. For:

> when a man takes it into his head to become learned, and the spirit of polymathy begins to excite him, he hardly ever examines which among the sciences are the most necessary to him, either for conducting himself as an honest man or perfecting his reason.[348]

Instead, such 'counterfeit scholars' choose to study: 'all rare things, all the extraordinary and irrelevant things, that others do not know, because through a subversion of the mind, they have attached the idea of learning to these things, and it is sufficient to be esteemed as learned to know what others do not

[344] See here Malebranche, *Search*, pp. xxxiii-xliii.
[345] Malebranche, *Search*, p. 296.
[346] Malebranche, *Search*, p. 296.
[347] Malebranche, *Search*, p. 299.
[348] Malebranche, *Search*, p. 297.

know'[349]. This is to say, in other words, that such 'counterfeit scholars' are not motivated by the utility of what they seek – even though they do think that the truths they seek are useful and important – but only because they wish to be esteemed for their ingenuity.

This being the case, however, it would seem that when Hume rejects the notion that the 'love of truth, as it displays itself in the sciences' is nothing more than a desire to exercise one's genius in the discovery of truths, even useless ones, that he is rejecting Malebranche's view that what is 'called science, erudition, knowledge' is the product of a vain desire to be esteemed as an ingenious thinker.[350] Indeed, towards this point, it is notable that this position was not just Malebranche's but can be found in a number of Hume's close contemporaries. For instance, Mandeville held that it was not uncommon:

> to see the most useful Parts of Learning neglected for the most trifling, when, from the latter, Men have Reason to hope that they shall have greater Opportunities of shewing their Parts, than offer themselves from the former. Ostentation and Envy have made more Authors than Virtue and Benevolence.[351]

And even Hutcheson, who did think that learned pursuits were generally performed from a virtuous benevolence, was of the opinion that 'the pursuits of the learned have often as much Folly in them as any others, when Studies are not valued according to their *Use in Life,* or the real Pleasures they contain, but for

[349] Malebranche, *Search*, p. 298.
[350] Malebranche, *Search*, p. 298.
[351] Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees: or Private Vices, Publick Benefits: The Second Volume*. Edited by F.B. Kaye. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924, p. 343.

the *Difficulty* and *Obscurity,* and consequently the *Rarity* and *Distinction*'[352]. Following Malebranche, Hutcheson held that this occurs when we attach false ideas of honour to what are otherwise the 'merest trifles', and are thus lead by our 'desire of distinction' to employ much 'tedious labour' in the pursuit of 'an *useless Problem,* a *Criticism on an obsolete Word,* [or] the *Origin of a Poetic Fable*'[353].

As such, it would seem that Malebranche's basic position that much of what passes for science is the product of a vain desire to be admired for one's genius, and that this leads to the pursuit of many patently trifling truths, was a philosophical commonplace in Hume's time. Not only this, but both Mandeville and Hutcheson – like Malebranche – regard the pursuit of truth for vanity's sake as being vicious (to at least some degree), whereas they regard the pursuit of truth on account of its general utility to be virtuous. In Mandeville this is arguably ironic, yet in Malebranche and Hutcheson it is genuine.

This being the case, however, it is notable that although Hume rejects the view that the love of truth is *merely* a desire to exercise one's genius in the discovery of truths – such that even the discovery of difficult yet trifling truths will satisfy us – he nevertheless regards it as being substantially correct. The exception is that the exercise of genius must be in pursuit of what one *regards* as 'useful and important' truths, which so-called 'counterfeit scholars' clearly do. As such, it would seem that Hume's overall aim was to demonstrate that what Malebranche

[352] Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense.* Edited by Aaron Garrett. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2002, p. 115.
[353] Hutcheson, *Essay*, p. 22.

and others saw as a 'counterfeit', 'vicious', 'tedious', or somehow *un*natural curiosity was the product of natural principles of the mind.

4. Hume's Account of Curiosity: Details

With this we can return to Hume's account of curiosity so as to examine its details. For if the above examination of Hume's target beliefs is correct, then we can now say that Hume's account of curiosity targets two distinct conceptions of human nature. On the one hand, Hume is concerned to argue against the belief that curiosity, as an innate desire to know, is natural to man, and is evidence of mankind's essential superiority over animals. While on the other, he is concerned to argue against the belief that curiosity, as a vicious desire to appear learned, is unnatural, and is evidence of man's essential inferiority to divine nature. However, supposing this is so, in what way did Hume intend his own account of curiosity to dispense with these two beliefs?

What I want to suggest is that Hume understood these two beliefs as philosophical prejudices that arise from, on the one hand, our favourably comparing curious human behaviour with uncurious animal behaviour, and on the other, from our unfavourably comparing curious human behaviour with the ideal of a perfectly virtuous love of knowledge. Hume's design with his account of curiosity is to undercut both these comparisons by revealing that (1) the origin of curiosity in human nature can be explained using principles that are observed to be common to man and beast, and (2) that a vicious curiosity arises from the very same principles as a benevolent love of truth. As such, there is no reason to

suppose that curiosity is evidence that human nature is essentially superior to animal nature, nor any reason to suppose that curiosity, as we commonly find it, is evidence that human nature is essentially inferior to divine nature. In doing so, Hume neither flatters human nature, vis-à-vis animals, nor debases human nature, vis-à-vis God, and thus his account of the origin of curiosity has a genuine claim to be an impartial account of the origin of this passion in human nature.

4.1 Curiosity from Principles common to Man and Beast

To show that Hume attempts to explain the origin of curiosity by appealing to principles that are common to man and beast, we must first be precise as to which principles Hume understood to produce the passion of curiosity. And here, the place to begin is with Hume's assertion that '[t]he first and most considerable circumstance requisite to render the discovery of truth agreeable, is the genius and capacity, which is employ'd in its invention and discovery' (T 2.3.10.3, SBN 449). For while Hume tells us that 'of all the other exercises of the mind' the exercise of genius is 'the most pleasant and agreeable' (T 2.3.10.3, SBN 449), he is less forthcoming than he could have been as to why exactly this is.

It seems reasonable to believe, however, that when Hume makes this observation he expects his readers to have in mind his remarks just two sections earlier that:

> 'Tis a quality very observable in human nature, that any opposition, which does not entirely discourage and intimidate us, has rather a contrary effect, and inspires us

> with a more than ordinary grandeur and magnanimity. In collecting our force to overcome the opposition, we invigorate the soul, and give it an elevation with which otherwise it wou'd never have been acquainted … Whatever supports and fills the passions is agreeable to us; as on the contrary, what weakens and infeebles them is uneasy.
>
> (T 2.3.8.4-5, SBN 433-4)

Amongst those things that naturally 'invigorate and inliven the soul', and thus that we naturally find pleasing, Hume includes: '[v]irtue, genius, power, and riches' (T 2.3.8.9, SBN 435).

Thus we find that Hume had already explained why it is that we find the exercise of genius to be pleasant. It is because our overcoming various difficulties so as to acquire the knowledge of a truth is something that 'invigorates and inlivens the soul' and this is something that we find to be pleasant. This said, however, we might still ask why we do find that whatever 'invigorates and inlivens the soul' to be pleasant, rather than discomforting?

Here we can refer back to a general observation that Hume had made in his account of love and hatred. In particular, Hume had remarked that:

> [t]hose who take a pleasure in declaiming against human nature, have observ'd, that man is altogether insufficient to support himself … From this, say they, proceeds that continual search after amusement in gaming, in hunting, in business … To this method of thinking I so far agree, that I own the mind to be insufficient, of itself, to

> its own entertainment, and that it naturally seeks after foreign objects, which may produce a lively sensation, and agitate the spirits.
>
> (T 2.2.4.4, SBN 352-3)

Hume had introduced this innate desire for entertainment into his account of human nature so as to explain why it is that 'company is naturally so rejoicing': for in 'company' we are presented with 'the liveliest of all objects, viz. a rational thinking being like ourselves' (T 2.2.4.4, SBN 353). At present, however, the point to note is that our innate desire for entertainment also explains why it is that we find anything that 'invigorates and inlivens the soul' to be pleasing, including the exercise of our genius in the discovery of truths.

With this point in place, however, we can make two others. The first is that Hume regards the desire for entertainment as the source of our 'continual search after amusement in gaming, in hunting, [and] in business'. This is especially pertinent because after having presented his account of the origin of curiosity in human nature, Hume attempts to 'illustrate' his arguments by drawing an analogy between, on the one hand, the passion for 'philosophy' and the passion for 'hunting', and, on the other, 'the passion of gaming, which affords a pleasure from the same principles as hunting and philosophy' (T 2.3.10.8-9, SBN 451-2). Hume's arguments here are interesting for a number of reasons, yet for current purposes, what is most pertinent is that Hume thinks that the passion for philosophy, i.e. 'the love of truth as it displays itself in the sciences', arises from the same principles as the passions for hunting, and for gaming. As such, insofar as Hume believes the passions for hunting and gaming begin with our innate

desire for entertainment, then we can presume that he thought our curiosity also begins with this natural inclination: namely, as a desire to exercise our genius for entertainment's sake.[354]

The second point, then, is that Hume regards an innate desire for entertainment to be common to man and animals. More precisely here, Hume holds that an 'acquaintance' with other creatures 'produces love in animals either to men or to each other' (T 2.2.12.4, SBN 397), and that this occurs from the same 'springs and principles' as those which see that human beings love those in their 'company' (T 2.2.12.1, SBN 397). What this implies, however, is that animals enjoy company (and especially human company) for the same reason that humans do: because the company of other thinking beings satisfies their innate desire for entertainment, and is thus something that they, like us, naturally find pleasant.

If we combine this second point with the first, then we have grounds to conclude that Hume understood curiosity to arise from an innate desire for entertainment, and that he understood this desire to be common to man and animals. Yet, this said, if curiosity originates from an innate impulse that is common to man and animals, why is it that we do not observe curious behaviour in animals? Hume's answer to this question, I suggest, is sympathy. For while Hume also thinks that '*sympathy*, or the communication of passions, takes place among animals, no less than among men', he nevertheless thinks that, *un*like what we find in humans, sympathy occurs in animals 'without their knowledge of that cause, which produc'd the original passion' (T 2.2.12.6, SBN 398). This being the case, Hume

[354] For a similar view on the origin of curiosity, see Cunningham (2007).

can say that it is our knowledge, through sympathy, that some entertaining objects cause pleasure to others, and others do not, that fixes our attention on the first objects, and not the others; and that this is why curiosity – which Hume thinks begins as a desire to exercise one's genius in the pursuit of useful and important truths – is a uniquely human passion.

In light of the above, I contend, we can conclude that Hume attempts to explain the origin of curiosity in human nature by appealing to principles that are common to man and beast; and thus that Hume intended his account of curiosity to reveal that there is no reason to suppose that this uniquely human passion is evidence that human nature is essentially superior to animal nature. In particular, I contend that Hume thinks curiosity originates in a desire for entertainment, common to humans and animals, modified by sympathy, also common, that leads us to pursue objects – in this case truths – that we regard as being in the interests of humanity to discover. From here it turns out that the entertaining pursuit of such truths leads us to develop a 'concern for [truth] itself', through 'the natural course of the affections' (T 2.3.10.7, SBN 451); yet nothing that Hume says on this point suggests that he thinks this happens from principles of the mind that are unique to human nature. Indeed, Hume compares this to a chemical reaction (see: T 2.3.10.9, SBN 452), which suggests the very opposite.

4.2. Vicious Curiosity from the Same Principles as Virtuous Curiosity

Having shown that Hume explains the origin of curiosity by appealing to principles that are common to man and beast, we can now turn to show that, in doing so, Hume accounts for the vicious desire to demonstrate one's intellectual prowess using the very same principles that account for the benevolent love of truth. To see this, first consider that curiosity, as Hume has described it, motivates the discovery of truths that are believed to be useful and important to others. This is because, according to Hume, a sympathetic concern for the public good is a necessary component of the origin of curiosity. More precisely, Hume thinks that without our taking a sympathetic interest in the public good we are 'careless and inattentive' in our pursuit of truth, and the exercise of our genius in the pursuit of truths is not as pleasing as it is otherwise (see: T 2.3.10.6, SBN 450-1). As such, we find that curious endeavour is naturally aligned with a benevolent concern for the public interest.

Yet, by the same measure, Hume acknowledges that there is a difficulty with supposing that to be a curious person is to pursue truths *because* one believes that they are 'useful and important'. I bracketed this difficulty earlier, but Hume puts the point like this:

> The difficulty on this head arises from hence, that many philosophers have consum'd their time, have destroy'd their health, and neglected their fortune, in the search of such truths, as they esteem'd important and useful to the world, tho' it appear'd from their whole conduct and behaviour, that they were not endow'd with any share of

> public spirit, nor had any concern for the interests of mankind. Were they convinc'd, that their discoveries were of no consequence, they wou'd entirely lose all relish for their studies, and that tho' the consequences be entirely indifferent to them; which seems to be a contradiction.
>
> (T 2.3.10.4, SBN 450)

What Hume is suggesting here (I submit) is that there are many curious persons who pursue truths that they believe to be 'important and useful to the world', but that whose behaviour suggests that they do not pursue such truths on account of their utility, or their importance. Rather, since they do not seem to have 'any share of public spirit, nor … any concern for the interests of mankind', and since they are even prepared to destroy their health and their wealth in the pursuit of such truths, we can only conclude that they pursue such truths from a desire of exercising their genius; either as a pleasing mental exercise, or to be esteemed for their intellectual prowess.

This is to say, in other words, that there are many philosophers who fit the mould of a Malebranchean 'counterfeit scholar'. That is, a scholar who, to use Hutcheson's description, does not value their studies 'according to their *Use in Life,* or the real Pleasures they contain, but for the *Difficulty* and *Obscurity,* and consequently the *Rarity* and *Distinction*'[355]. The chief desire of such philosophers is to distinguish themselves from others through the exercise of their genius,

[355] Hutcheson, *Essay*, p. 115.

thus they will 'ruin [their] health and lose [their] wealth'[356] (says Malebranche, before Hume) in the pursuit of what are arguably useless and trifling studies.

The difficulty for Hume's theory arises in cases where the studies that such philosophers pursue are genuinely of little to no utility or importance. For, according to Hume's theory, were these philosophers to become convinced that their pursuits were useless or trifling, then 'they wou'd entirely lose all relish for their studies'. However, if we are to judge them on the basis of their behaviour, then it would seem that the utility and importance of their studies are irrelevant to them, and that *all* they desire is to exercise their genius in the discovery of truths; thus they would continue in their studies regardless. This being the case, there 'seems to be a contradiction' between what Hume's theory predicts and what experience leads us to expect.

Hume's (purported) solution to this difficulty is to claim that 'there are certain desires and inclinations, which go no farther than the imagination, and are rather the faint shadows and images of passions, than any real affections' (T 2.3.10.5, SBN 450). For instance, Hume thinks that we 'receive a suitable pleasure and satisfaction' from considering the usefulness of an enemy's defences, while at the same time having 'no kindness for them', or even while 'entertain[ing] a hatred against them' (T 2.3.10.5, SBN 450). Having made this claim, Hume asserts that this sort of 'remote sympathy' with 'the interests of mankind' is *all* that is necessary in order to 'fix our attention' on any truth (T 2.3.10.6, SBN 450-1). This being the case, it is *not* necessary to have any 'real affection' for 'the interests of

[356] Malebranche, *Search*, p. 296.

mankind' in order to be a genuinely curious person. Instead all one must have is 'an idea', through sympathy, of the public utility of one's studies in order to find the exercise of one's genius to be satisfying (see: T 2.3.10.8, SBN 451-2): one need not be *motivated* by benevolence towards one's fellow man.

To Hume's mind this explains why there are so many curious people who seem to have no 'public spirit', nor any concern for themselves, but who simply wish to exercise their genius in the discovery of truths that they believe – incorrectly – are useful and important to mankind. Such behaviour is vicious, for it produces no benefit to anyone, and is harmful to the person. However, if Hume's account of its origin is accurate, then this vicious curiosity is a product of the very same principles as a benevolent love of truth: namely, a desire to exercise one's genius and a 'sympathy' with 'the interests of mankind'. This being the case, however, what Hume's account of curiosity shows is that there is no reason to suppose that curiosity, in its vicious form, is somehow unnatural, such that the prevalence of so-called 'counterfeit scholars' is evidence that human nature is essentially inferior to divine nature, in which the benevolent desire for knowledge is perfectly realised.

5. Conclusion

My aim in the above has been to present Hume's account of curiosity as an attempt at impartial self-understanding, in light of the commonplace belief that mankind's curious behaviour has no analogue in the animal world. To this end I have argued that Hume's account of the origin of this passion targets two

common philosophical beliefs regarding the origin of curiosity in human nature. The first of these is that curiosity is an innate desire for truth that marks an essential difference between human nature and animal nature, while the second is that curiosity, as we commonly find it, is a vicious desire to appear learned that is evidence of man's essential inferiority to divine nature, in which a virtuous love of truth is perfectly instantiated.

It is my contention that Hume attacks these two beliefs by, on the one hand, revealing that the origin of curiosity in human nature can be traced to principles that are common to man and beast, and, on the other, by demonstrating that the vicious desire to appear learned arises from the same principles as the benevolent love of truth. In doing so, Hume neither favourably compares curious human behaviour to uncurious animal behaviour, nor unfavourably compares curious human behaviour with the ideal of a perfectly virtuous love of knowledge; thus he presents an account of the origin of curiosity in human nature that has a genuine claim to impartiality.

By way of conclusion, I want to suggest that when read in this way, Hume's account of curiosity supplements the final section of Part Three of Book One, '*Of the Reason of Animals*'. In this section, which concludes Hume's discussion of mankind's capacity for demonstrative and probable reasoning, Hume argues that the 'vulgar' actions of animals – such as their aversion to that which is likely to harm them, and their love for those who have previously benefited them – 'proceed from a reasoning, that is not in itself different, nor founded on different principles, from that which appears in human nature' (T 1.3.16.6, SBN 177). In

doing so, Hume saw himself as correcting the 'common defect' of existing philosophical accounts of *human* reasoning, namely, 'that they suppose such subtility and refinement of thought, as not only exceeds the capacity of mere animals, but even of children, and the common people in our own species' (T 1.3.16.3, SBN 177). By contrast, Hume held that his explanation of human reasoning – at least in its vulgar form – was equally applicable to the reasoning of animals; which he took to be a 'proof' of the 'truth' of his 'system' as applied to the *human* mind (T 1.3.16.1-3, SBN 176-7).

At the same time, however, Hume's extension of his 'system' of vulgar human reasoning to animal reasoning leaves it open as to whether uniquely human forms of reasoning – such as demonstrative reasoning, but also refined or *scientific* probable reasoning – are 'founded on' principles that are unique to human beings. For even if the *vulgar* reasoning of humans is 'founded on' the same as the principles as the reasoning of animals, it is nevertheless possible that these two *scientific* forms of reasoning, which are *not* common to man and animals (in fact they are not even common to all humans) are caused by principles that appear only in human nature. Indeed, it was Hobbes' stated view that curiosity, as the only uniquely human passion, must be the cause of these two uniquely human forms of understanding, which he collectively called 'science'[357].

Yet, if my interpretation of Hume's account of curiosity is correct, then Hume's answer to this question is that even these uniquely human or *scientific* forms of

[357] See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 24-7. For an excellent argument to this end, see Tabb (2014).

reasoning are 'founded on' principles that are common to man and animals. For, insofar as (a) the origin of scientific curiosity in human nature can be explained using principles that are common to man and beast, and (b) the origin of scientific forms of reasoning can be explained by appealing to 'the love of truth, which displays itself in the sciences', then (c) the origin of these distinctly human forms of reasoning can be explained without supposing that they are caused by principles that are unique to human beings. As such, we can say that Hume's account of curiosity supplements his account of mankind's capacity for demonstrative and probable reasoning by revealing that *all* aspects of human understanding can be explained using principles that have been observed to operate in both man and beast.

This is not to say, to be clear, that Hume's primary aim with his account of curiosity was to supplement his discussion of the reasoning of animals. Nor is this the only way that we can read Hume's account of curiosity as supplementing his arguments in Book One. Indeed, it seems very likely that close readings of Hume's account of curiosity will help us to better understand his thoughts in the concluding passages of Book One. Yet, whatever else Hume was aiming at, an impartial account of the uniquely human 'love of truth' is surely amongst his most useful and important achievements.

Conclusion

'Never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my Treatise of Human Nature'[358], wrote Hume, in 1776, towards the very end of his life. 'It fell *dead-born from the press*, without reaching such distinction, as even to excite a murmur among the zealots'[359]. The sixty-five year old Hume blamed the still-birth (in his opinion) of his *Treatise* on his youthful 'indiscretion, in going to press to early'[360], at the age of twenty-six. Indeed, not long before, Hume had instructed that all further editions of his *Enquiries* (i.e. the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, and the *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*) were to come with an 'advertisement' to the effect that these works 'may alone be regarded as containing his philosophical sentiments and principles'[361]. For the *Treatise*, he admitted there, was a 'juvenile work', which he had 'projected before he left college, and which he wrote and published not long after'[362].

The *Treatise* certainly has its juvenile moments. One of my favourites is Hume's explanation as to why 'men of good families, but narrow circumstances' often

[358] David Hume, *My Own Life*, in David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, (ed. Stephen Buckle) Cambridge University Press, 2007 (*My Own Life*), pp. 215.
[359] Hume, *My Own Life*, p. 216.
[360] Hume, *My Own Life*, p. 217.
[361] See David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, (ed. Stephen Buckle) Cambridge University Press, 2007, p 2.
[362] Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, p. 2.

chose to 'leave their friends and country' to find employment, rather than stay at home (T 2.1.11.14, SBN 322). It is because such men, Hume suggests, find their poor condition easier to bear when amongst strangers, than when amongst their close relations, who might expect better; and because the further away they are from their families the less they feel their contempt (T 2.1.11.14, SBN 322). It is not very hard to imagine Hume explaining his own decision to leave home in this manner, and being impressed with the ingenuity of his explanation.

Another good one is his explanation as to why 'children esteem their relation to their mother weaken'd, in great measure, by her second marriage, and no longer regard her with the same eye, as if she had continu'd in her state of widow-hood' (T 2.2.4.9, SBN 355). Hume's own mother, we know because Hume tells us, continued in her state of widow-hood after his father had died.[363] And while we have every reason to believe that Hume loved his mother, we might easily imagine the young Hume loving her a little less, had she remarried. These examples both come from Book Two, which, almost as a rule, is over-stuffed with examples. Indeed, it is arguable that of the three books of Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature*, it is Book Two that most reads as if it was written by a twenty-six year old man.

Still, history would seem to have proven Hume wrong as to the philosophical value of the *Treatise*. Its juvenile moments, and Hume's general explanatory over-zealousness, make no small contribution to its greatness, which is now well recognised. Indeed, it is an interesting question whether Hume, who also tells us

[363] Hume, *My Own Life*, p. 215.

that his 'ruling passion' was 'a love of literary fame'[364], would be pleased to find that scholars of his thought have ignored his directions, and that his present-day philosophical standing is in large part due to the increasing recognition of the *Treatise* as a philosophical classic. I myself doubt he would have been too bothered. Indeed, he does say that he had 'always entertained a notion', that his 'want of success in publishing the Treatise of Human Nature, had proceeded more from the manner than the matter'[365]. Thus, however ashamed he may have become of the manner, he would at least be pleased that the matter is now taken seriously.

This is no less true of Book Two than of the other books of the *Treatise*. Indeed if anything it is more true for Book Two than for Books One and Three. For, as I outlined in the introduction, Book Two of the *Treatise* has moved from being seen as a 'hindrance' lodged between Book One to Book Three, to being regarded by many as 'the most important [Book] for exemplifying the major themes of Hume's philosophy'[366]. When read together with Book One, Book Two completes Hume's destruction of "rationalism" as a model for understanding human thought and action. Not only this, but Book Two provides the 'foundation' for the rest of Hume's "anti-rationalist" science of human nature. Book Two, then, has come to be regarded as the centrepiece of Hume's *Treatise*.

By the same measure, however, the 'matter' of Book Two is largely thought to *matter* insofar as it contributes to Hume's epistemological or moral goals. What I

[364] Hume, *My Own Life*, pp. 215-6.
[365] Hume, *My Own Life*, p. 217.
[366] Nicholas Capaldi, *David Hume, The Newtonian Philosopher*, Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975, p. 130.

have argued here, by contrast, is that Hume's philosophy of the passions, as set out in Book Two of the *Treatise*, has a philosophical importance that is independent of the rest of his philosophical writings. More precisely, I have argued that Hume's writings on the passions display a considerable unity of purpose when read as an attempt to avoid (1) favourably comparing human sociability and actions to animal sociability and actions, and thus supposing that human beings are essentially superior to animals, and (2) unfavourably comparing human sociability and actions to an imagined ideal of perfect wisdom, and thus supposing that human sociability and actions are inferior versions of analogous divine capacities for sociability and action. Hume's designs here come to a head with his account of curiosity at the end of Book Two. But they can – I claim to have shown here – be traced throughout the whole thing, when the whole thing is placed within its most relevant intellectual contexts.

By way of conclusion, I would like to briefly suggest two ways in which this general interpretation of Hume's philosophy of the passions might be developed further. Firstly, there is no reason – at least not that I can see – to think that the interpretative framework I have developed here would not extend to the study of books One and Two together. This is it say that, *prima facie*, it is reasonable to believe that Books One and Two of the *Treatise* form – in Hume's words – 'a compleat chain of reasoning' (T *Advertisement* (1739 – p. 2), SBN xii), insofar as they attempt to liberate the science of human nature from the various philosophical prejudices that arise from (1) favourably comparing human capacities for thought, sociability and action to animal thought, sociability and action, and (2) unfavourably comparing man's finite capacities for thought,

sociability and action to the infinite knowledge, goodness, and power of the divine nature.

I envisage that Hume's writings on the nature of abstract ideas will form a central plank of any analysis here (see T 1.1.7, SBN 17-25 and also T 1.3.1.7, SBN 72-3). More precisely, it seems possible to understand Hume's particular "theory of ideas" as an attempt to explain the uniquely human capacity for meaningful speech without (a) supposing any essential difference between man and animals (only ever differences of degree), and (b) without supposing that this capacity is an inferior version of an analogous divine capacity. The same seems true of Hume's account of demonstrative and probable reasoning (see here T 1.3, SBN 69-179) – indeed a number of scholars have already made similar claims, especially regarding Hume's account of probable reasoning.[367] Were I able to make out these general claims regarding Hume's intentions with Book One then I would have a unified account of Books One and Two that is (arguably) conceptually self-standing: such that we might consider Hume's fundamental claims regarding mankind's understanding and passions as being independent (to this extent) from the moral philosophy that he develops in Book Three of the *Treatise* – and in this sense making 'a compleat chain of reasoning *by themselves*' (T *Advertisement* (1739 – p. 2), SBN xii: emphasis mine).

Secondly, it seems to me (at least) that the general picture of Hume's account of the 'indirect' passions that I have developed here can be used to shed new light

[367] See here, Peter Kail, Leibniz's Dog and Humean Reason' in *New Essays on David Hume* (eds. Emilio Mazza and Emanuele Ronchetti), Milan: Angeli, 2007, pp. 65–80; and Edward Craig, *The Mind of God and the Works of Man*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987, esp. 69-130.

on Hume's moral philosophy in Book Three. For while there is now broad agreement amongst scholars that Hume saw a tight connection between the passions of pride, humility, love and hatred, and our sentiments of moral approval and disapproval, it is by no means obvious just what Hume considered this connection to be. It is my opinion that we stand to learn a lot here from studying the role of the understanding within Hume's account of the 'indirect' passions, as well as sympathy. In particular, it is my contention that Hume understands man's moral nature to be a product of mankind's superior degree of 'knowledge and understanding', compared to animals, rather than from the possession, *per se*, of a moral sensibility.

This is a delicate interpretative claim, but it is one that fits neatly within the general thesis that Hume thinks all aspects of human nature must be explained using principles that have been observed to operate in both man and animals, if we are to achieve a genuinely impartial self-understanding. Namely, it is the claim that man's unique status as a moral creature is wholly explicable in terms of a difference of degree between human reason and animal reason. As such, any supposition of an essential difference between human nature and animal natures is unwarranted – including both the supposition of uniquely human rational capacities, from which moral distinctions and behaviour arise, *and* the supposition of an innate moral sensibility.

In setting out these further avenues for research I do not pretend to have made any headway on establishing them here. Rather, my aim here has been to show that Hume's philosophy of the passions, as set out in Book Two of the *Treatise*, is

unified by a destructive agenda. In particular, that Hume attempts to liberate the science of human nature from false accounts of human sociability and action that he believes have been generated by superstitious religious beliefs, ancient philosophical sophistries, and insufficiently careful attention to experience; and that, in doing so, Hume has earned a rightful place amongst the educators of mankind.

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